Mapping Métis Stories: Land Use, Gender and Kinship in the Qu'Appelle Valley, 1850-1950

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Abstract

Examining Métis land use and occupancy of the Qu'Appelle Valley from 1850 to the mid-twentieth century, this dissertation addresses change and continuity in food harvesting practices, land tenure, spatial organization and family, kinship, and gender roles. It asks, What was the family and community contribution of women's labour in food harvesting, preparation, production, and sharing from 1850-1950? Utilizing a methodology called "deep mapping" to merge qualitative approaches with digital technologies, it combines Indigenous community-based and oral history research methods, genealogical reconstruction, and Historical Geographic Information Systems (HGIS). HGIS combines historical research methods with Geographic Information Systems (GIS), a computer-based mapping and spatial analysis technology for organization and analysis of geographically referenced data.

Métis families first came to the Qu'Appelle Valley to hunt buffalo before taking up land on a seasonal and then on a more permanent basis by the 1860s. They supported themselves through trade with, and wage labour for the Hudson's Bay Company as well as by what they could hunt, gather and grow. Doing so, they relied on recognizable cultural practices, including those that reinforced family and kinship structures and the roles that women filled in food gathering, preservation, and production. By the early twentieth century, as families struggled to survive within a growing, and often hostile, settler society, many found themselves displaced and forced to relocate to the road allowances or unoccupied Crown land around the Qu'Appelle Lakes. Each time these families moved, they resettled along familiar extended family lines and adapted to changing economic, social and political situations. When challenged by the imposition of settler colonialism, foreign land tenure practices, government regulation, surveillance, and state intervention into their livelihoods, they responded in flexible individual and collective ways grounded in an Indigenous worldview, their understanding of place, and familiar political approaches. They maintained a subsistence lifestyle of fishing, trapping, and harvesting wild plants and medicines mixed with small-scale agriculture and seasonal wage labour in the settler economy. Qu'Appelle Métis lived according to a worldview that privileged kinship relationships, extended family relationships, complementary gender roles in food production, and a mixed subsistence lifestyle. Consequently, women made a significant

contribution to the economic production of their families through their food harvesting, production, and preparation activities.

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Maarsii.

Dedication

For Margaret Harrison, Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne
And, members of the Qu'Appelle Valley Métis community who have shared their stories with me.

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CPR	Canadian Pacific Railway
GDI	Gabriel Dumont Institute
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GPS	Global Positioning System
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
HBCA	Hudson's Bay Company Archives
HGIS	Historical Geographic Information Systems
LAC	Library and Archives Canada
NWT	North-West Territories
PAS	Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan

Chapter One: Situating Qu'Appelle Valley Métis

"Hungry Half Breed Song"
(*for Wannie Fisher*)

There's worms in the porridge
There's ants in the jam
The bannock's all dried up
There's no lard in the pan
There's a mouse in the teapot
There's bugs in the spam
There's flies in the buttermilk
But I don't give a damn."[1]

Descended from generations of Qu'Appelle Valley buffalo hunters and born into a large Métis family, writer and storyteller Joe Welsh's, *Hungry Half Breed Song* succinctly, and with deprecating humour, captures both the poverty and the diet of many Qu'Appelle Valley Métis families well into the twentieth century. Using and occupying the valley region since the mid-nineteenth century, these families adapted to changing social and economic conditions brought about by the end of the buffalo hunt, encroaching settler society and the imposition of Canadian Government policy on their livelihoods.[2] By the mid-1880s, Métis families increasingly struggled to provide for themselves and their families, doing so by relying heavily on what they could hunt, gather and grow and by looking to recognizable cultural practices, particularly those that reinforced family and kinship relationships and responsibilities and the roles that women filled in food gathering, preservation and production.

By the end of the nineteenth century, many of these families increasingly faced racial discrimination from settler society and lived on land they no longer owned. Dispossessed and displaced within the territory their families had permanently occupied for at least two generations, many moved to the road allowance or to Crown land that lined the Qu'Appelle Lakes. Moving to the road allowance was a move within familiar

[1] Joe Welsh, "Hungry Half Breed Song," *Jackrabbit Street* (Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 2003), 33.
[2] There are no true buffalo native to North America. The species commonly referred to as buffalo is either Plains bison (*Bison bison Bison*) or Wood bison (*Bison bison Athabascau*). I have chosen to use the term buffalo in this work as it was the term used during the period being studied.

territory and understood within a Métis worldview. These families made choices about how to remain on the land and continue to harvest essential environmental resources, and they made choices about how to spatially organize themselves within recognizable extended family groupings that privileged the relationships between individuals. Indeed, these community formation patterns have been consistent since these families began hunting buffalo in this region in the mid-1850s and are like other Métis communities of the period.[3] These patterns are markers of Métis identity and a means of claiming land and territory when faced with displacement and dispossession. This dissertation, centering on oral stories, family and community formation patterns and gender roles in maintaining a subsistence lifestyle mixed with small-scale agriculture in the Qu'Appelle Valley environment, serves to locate and reclaim Métis spaces by demonstrating the maintenance of Métis identity and worldview amidst a period of intense settler colonialism and racial discrimination.

This research asks questions related to the maintenance of a subsistence lifestyle of hunting, trapping, and gathering wild foods combined with small-scale agricultural production and wage labour from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. Specifically asking, what contribution did Qu'Appelle Valley Métis women's labour in food harvesting, preparation and production make in their families and communities from 1850-1950? It answers this question by spatially exploring the ways in which stories, gender, kinship and labour intersect and interact across geographies and over time. This research traces family and community formation patterns, economic activity and land occupancy changes temporally, revealing a continuity in gender roles and kinship patterns and processes within a period of economic, social and political change. It demonstrates a continued relationship to, and reliance on the physical environment in the

[3] Brenda Macdougall and Nicole St. Onge, "Rooted in Mobility: Métis Buffalo Hunting Brigades," *Manitoba History* 71 (Winter 2013).; Cheryl Troupe, "Métis Women: Social Structure, Urbanization, and Political Activism, 1850–1980" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2010).; Martha Harroun Foster, *We Know Who We Are: Métis Identity in a Montana Community* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).; Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004).; Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).; John E. Foster, "Wintering, the Outsider Adult Male and Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis," *Prairie Forum* 19, no. 1 (Spring 1994): 1–13.; Dianne Paulette Payment, *'The Free People – Otipemisiwak: Batoche 1870-1930* (Ottawa: National Historical Parks and Sites, 1990).

ways Métis families resisted government surveillance, intervention and regulation of their livelihoods.

Located in southeast Saskatchewan, the Qu'Appelle Valley formed as a glacial spillway. The Valley has a flat bottom with steep side slopes and varies from 1.6 to 3.2 km in width (Figure 1.1 and 1.2).[4] The Qu'Appelle River flows through the Valley, east from Lake Diefenbaker to join the Assiniboine River in Manitoba, south of Lake of the Prairies. The River flows through and feeds six major lakes, four of which are known as the Qu'Appelle Lakes or the Fishing Lakes. Underground aquifers and numerous creeks flowing into the Valley also feed these lakes. The Qu'Appelle Lakes include, from west to east, Pasqua, Echo, Mission and Katepwa Lakes. Further east the River flows through Crooked and Round Lakes.

Figure 1.1: Qu'Appelle Valley, Saskatchewan

[4] Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, *Lower Qu'Appelle River Watershed Plan*, March 2013. https://www.wsask.ca/Global/Water%20Info/Watershed%20Planning/Lower%20Qu'Appelle%20Watershed/Lower%20Qu'Appelle%20River%20Watershed%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf

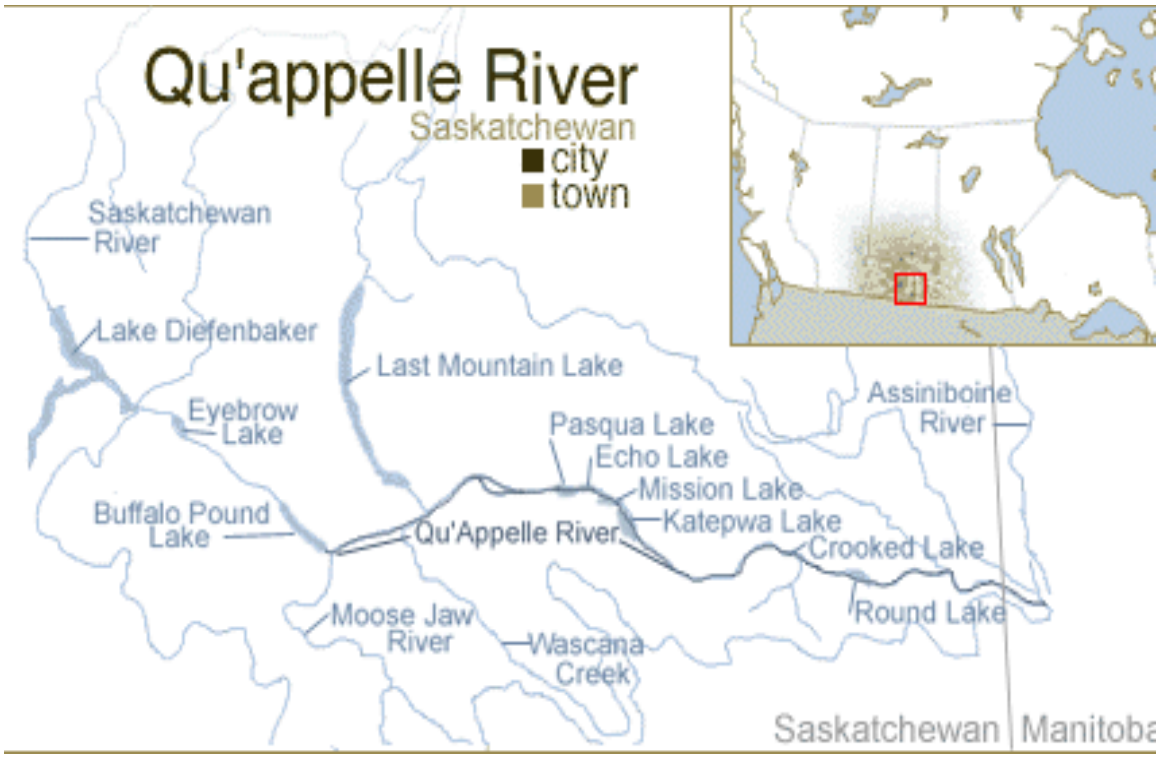

Figure 1.2: Map of Southeast Saskatchewan[5]

The Qu'Appelle Valley is located in territory that at different times has been dominated by Gros Ventre, Assiniboine and Plains Cree. Henry Kelsey, in his expedition from York Factory in 1690-91 noted the presence of Assiniboine in the Touchwood Hills region north of the Valley. The Touchwood Hills, historian Arthur Ray contends was likely the western boundary of their territory because the lower Saskatchewan River and Qu'Appelle Valley regions were occupied by Gros Ventre during this period.[6] The Valley remained Gros Ventre territory well into the 1760s but by the 1790s, was occupied by the southward moving Assiniboine. In 1793, the Gros Ventre engaged in a skirmish with the Plains Cree on the South Saskatchewan River near South Branch House. The Cree were victorious in killing 16 Gros Ventre lodges. The Gros Ventre and Cree had been embattled in ongoing skirmishes of this nature for a number of years. However, following their 1793 defeat, they began withdrawing from the Qu'Appelle region, opening it up for

[5] Saskatchewan Water Security Agency, *Lower Qu'Appelle River Watershed Plan*, March 2013. https://www.wsask.ca/Global/Water%20Info/Watershed%20Planning/Lower%20Qu'Appelle%20Watershed/Lower%20Qu'Appelle%20River%20Watershed%20Plan%20-%20Final.pdf

[6] Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands Southwest of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

both the Cree and Assiniboine. By 1808, Alexander Henry the Younger noted the presence of 200 bands of the Paddling and Foot Assiniboine in the Qu'Appelle region stretching westward from the confluence of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers.[7] By 1821, the Assiniboine continued to be centred in the Souris River and Qu'Appelle River regions while the Cree moved into the Touchwood Hills region, north of the Qu'Appelle. After 1821, the Assiniboine moved out of the region, gravitating toward the international border attracted by trade opportunities with the American fur posts and in response to the contraction of the buffalo herds.[8] As they vacated the territory, the Plains Cree moved southward into the area. By the 1850s and into the 1860s, when the Métis began wintering in the Qu'Appelle region, it was firmly Plains Cree territory extending from the Cypress Hills, across the Wood and Moose Mountain regions and north toward the confluence of the Qu'Appelle and Assiniboine Rivers. That the Métis were granted access and hunting privileges into Cree and Assiniboine territory is likely due to their participation in the Nehiyaw-Pwat, or Iron Confederacy. This was a political and military alliance amongst Plains Cree, Assiniboine, Plains Ojibwe and Métis bands across western Canada and the northern United States. Their enemies were the Gros Ventre, Blackfoot, Sioux and Mandan/Hidatsa.[9] For the Métis the Sioux remained their enemy until after the Métis victory over the Sioux at the Battle of Grand Coteau in 1851. After which time, historian W.L. Morton argues, that Métis victory ended any long-standing disputes and created peace between these long-time adversaries.[10]

The Qu'Appelle River and Valley are named for a story held in the Cree oral tradition. Roughly translated into English as "Who Calls," there are different versions of the story interpreted and recorded by nineteenth century missionaries and fur traders. Perhaps the most popular version is Mohawk poet, E. Pauline Johnson's turn of the twentieth century poem, "The Legend of the Qu'Appelle Valley."[11] Johnson's poem is

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[7] Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 96.
[8] Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 182-183.
[9] John Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790-1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1990).
[10] William Morton, "The Battle of Grand Coteau: July 13 and 14, 1851," *Manitoba Historical Society Transactions*, Series 3, 1959-60 Season. www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/grandcoteau.shtml
[11] Pauline E. Johnson, "Legend of the Qu'Appelle Valley," in E. Pauline Johnson, *Tekahionwake: Collected Poems and Selected Prose*, eds. Veronica Strong-Boag and Carole Gerson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 126-128.

based on the story told to her by Father Hugonnard at the Lebret Mission. [12] The poem tells the story of a young Cree hunter who, canoeing home on the Fishing Lakes, hears a voice. He calls out, "Qui appelle" or "who calls," but receives only his echo in response. He returns home to discover that the young woman he was to marry has died but that with her last breath, she twice called out his name.

North West Company fur trader Daniel Harmon, who travelled through the region in March 1804, recorded another version.[13] He described the river's name: "Ca-ta-buy-seps or the River that Calls, named by the local Indigenous people who imagined a spirit moving up and down the River with a voice that resembled the cry of a human being."[14] Henry Youle Hind recalled a similar account in his 1858 Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition. In July, the expedition travelled downstream from Mission Lake, through Katepwa and down river into the Assiniboine River at Fort Ellice. Here, they met an old Cree hunter who intimately knew the Qu'Appelle Valley and the names of the numerous creeks flowing into the river. Using a charred stick, the hunter drew a detailed map of the Qu'Appelle Valley on the fort's floor boards. Amazed at the map's precision, Hind retorted that it showed "every little creek so accurately that [he] easily recognized them."[15] The name for the river, was "Katapaywie sepe." In Hind's telling, it was not the cry of a woman heard, but a loud voice. According to Hind,

> A solitary Indian was coming down the river in his canoe many summers ago, when one day he heard a loud voice calling to him; he stopped and listened and again heard the same voice as before. He shouted in reply, but there was no answer. He searched everywhere around, but could not find the tracks of anyone. So, from that time forth, it was named the "Who Calls River."[16]

Novelist Trevor Herriot narrates a different version of the story. He writes that it was Cree Chief, Loud Voice that recounted the story to an Oblate missionary, who then interpreted and passed on the story. One of the signatories of Treaty 4, Loud Voice or Kakeesheway was leader of the Cree at Crooked Lake. Calling the river, kahtapwao sepe

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[12] Trevor Herriot, *River in a Dry Land: A Prairie Passage* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2000), 8.
[13] Daniel Harmon, *Harmon's Journal, 1800-1819* (North Saanich, BC: New Caledonia House Publishing, 2006), 63.
[14] Harmon, *Harmon's Journal,* 76.
[15] Henry Youle Hind, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857, and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1971), 370.
[16] Hind, *Narrative,* 370.

or "What is Calling? River," the Missionary credited the name to an event occurring years prior when two groups of people met at the river. One group was on the north side, the other on the south. With no way to cross, they traded news shouting back and forth at each other from their respective shores.[17] Each of these versions is slightly different, but collectively they demonstrate that the Qu'Appelle Valley is a place where people gather and share stories, and a place that holds stories.

Mapping Stories and Kinship

This work utilizes Indigenous research methods, oral history interviews, genealogical reconstruction, archival research, and Historical Geographic Information Systems (HGIS) methodologies in new and innovative ways, working within a framework grounded in relationships, cultural protocols, Métis lived experience and worldview. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) is a computer-based mapping and spatial analysis technology that allows for methodical organization and analysis of geographically referenced data. HGIS, merges historical research methods with GIS technology, allowing me to link stories, family genealogies and geographically referenced data to specific places on maps at specific points in time. This research merges qualitative sources and approaches with digital technologies. Until recently, HGIS methods have largely concentrated on analysis of quantitative rather than qualitative sources.[18] Recent HGIS scholarship however, recognizes the need and potential in mapping qualitative sources and has begun to shift towards such approaches as revealed by digital humanist Ian Gregory and historical geographer Anne Kelly Knowles.[19]

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[17] Herriot, *River,* 10-12.

[18] Geoff Cunfer, *On the Great Plains: Agriculture and Environment* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2005).; Brian Donahue, Brian Donahue, *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

[19] David Cooper and Ian N. Gregory, "Mapping the English Lake District: A Literary GIS," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 36 (2011): 89-109.; Anne Kelly Knowles, "Emerging Trends in Historical GIS," *Historical Geography* 33 (2005):7-13.; Ian N. Gregory, *A Place in History: A Guide to Using GIS in Historical Research* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2003).; Ian N. Gregory and Richard G. Healey, "Historical GIS: Structuring Mapping and Analysing Geographies of the Past," *Progress in Human Geography* 31 (2007): 638-653.; Ian N. Gregory and Alistair Geddes, *Toward Spatial Humanities: Historical GIS & Spatial History* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 2014).; Anne Kelly Knowles, ed. *Past Time, Past Place: GIS for History* (Redlands, California: ESRI Press, 2002).; Anne Kelly Knowles, ed. *Placing History: How Maps, Spatial Data, and GIS are Changing Historical Scholarship* (Redlands, California: ESRI Press, 2008).; David Bodenhamer, John Corrigan and Trevor M. Harris, *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,

Merging these methods provides new approaches and insight into thinking about the relationship between individuals, their stories and familiar places. Using a process called "deep mapping," this research captures how people think about space and how they create meaning about specific places.[20] It demonstrates how storytellers ground themselves in specific places and families, and how they understand themselves through their stories, kinship and connections to place. By deep mapping qualitative oral history and genealogical sources this research links individual stories to specific places on a map, privileging Indigenous value systems, perspectives and worldviews. This is particularly important for telling Indigenous stories which are deeply rooted in our local landscapes and connect us to our families, communities, culture, values and histories. Using HGIS methods this research traces Métis land tenure practices and change over time, challenging the dominant Canadian settlement narrative that presented the prairie west as open and ready for settlement following the Dominion Lands survey. At a closer scale, HGIS allows for advanced spatial analysis of residency patterns linking them with individual stories and experiences, socioeconomic data and land use data at specific geographic locations at multiple points in time. This allows for testing theories about kinship, particularly the significance of women's kinship in community formation and maintenance. Foregrounding gender perspectives, this research draws conclusions about the extent to which the Métis successfully adapted to changing social and economic conditions, the degree to which they became agriculturalists and continued to rely on hunting and gathering of wild foods. The following chapter explores the innovative and overlapping use of these methodologies.

2010).; Meagan Cope and Sarah Elwood, eds. *Qualitative GIS: A Mixed Methods Approach* (London: Sage, 2009).

[20] For a discussion of Deep Mapping, see: David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris, eds., *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives*, (Indiana University Press, 2015).; Mia Ridge, Don Lafreniere, and Scott Nesbit, "Creating Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives through Design," *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 7, no. 1–2 (October 1, 2013): 176–89.; Katie Oxx, Allan Brimicombe and Johnathan Rush, "Envisioning Deep Maps: Exploring the Spatial Navigation Metaphor in Deep Mapping," *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 7.1-2 (2013): 204-205.; Shelley Fisher-Fiskin. "'Deep Maps': A Brief for Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects (DPMPS, or 'Deep Maps'," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3 no. 2 (2011).

Situating Qu'Appelle Métis in the Historiography

This research complicates and challenges the dominant narrative of Western Canadian expansion and settlement and contributes to the complex story of nation building and understandings of the manifestation of settler colonialism in Saskatchewan and Canada in the twentieth century. It has broad implications and is a lens for examining larger transnational issues such Indigenous responses to settler colonialism, increased regulation and surveillance of Indigenous economies and livelihoods and the erasure of Indigenous peoples from the landscape. This research contributes to understandings of gender, family, and kinship roles and responsibilities in Indigenous communities, highlighting the maintenance and continuation of these practices into the twentieth century. Much of the scholarship on twentieth century Métis has framed their experiences in terms of their marginalization but this research recasts the Métis, women specifically, as being adaptable to economic, political and social changes, as having agency in pressing for the recognition of their rights and resisting government oppression, surveillance and imposition into their daily lives. Consequently, this work contributes significantly to numerous fields of scholarship situating Prairie Métis within the fields of Environmental History, Western Canadian and Prairie History and Gender History.

Environmental History

This dissertation adds to the growing field of Environmental History and builds on several familiar themes. It considers individual and collective environmental understandings and relationships to the land. It examines the ways people interact with and respond to change in their environments and it draws attention to the economic, social, cultural and political nature of subsistence economies. Indigenous peoples' presence in early works of Environmental History scholarship is clear.[21] Environmental History scholarship since the 1980s has examined Indigenous land use practices,

[21] Richard White, *Land Use, Environment and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).; William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).; Stephen Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).
Robert Boyd, *Indians, Fire and The Land in the Pacific Northwest* (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1999).; Thomas Vale, ed. *Fire, Native Peoples and the Natural Landscape* (Washington: Island Press, 2002).

portraying Indigenous peoples as modifiers of actively managed and humanized landscapes. Richard White, William Cronon and Stephen Pyne's works stand out in demonstrating Indigenous peoples' sophisticated understanding of their environments and the ways they modified them to their benefit. White's study of a single county, Island County, Washington, provides a detailed and nuanced analysis of how the Salish altered their environment, specifically through prescribed burning to encourage specific crops and occupancy of specific game populations. His work is important as it reveals the spiritual significance of the environment for the Salish and links culture, social change and the environment. Comparably, Cronon's important study of New England contrasts colonial and pre-colonial land use systems, demonstrating that when Europeans arrived, New England was not a pristine environment, but one that was managed and modified. His work is a thorough account of ecological transformation resulting from the introduction European land use systems and practices. Analyzing the relationship between Indigenous peoples, colonists and their environments, Cronon argues that both Indigenous peoples and Euro-Americans altered their landscapes, but that Indigenous alterations were less volatile. They employed controlled burning to form edge environments, helping to re-populate game in the region and to increase the rate of returning nutrients to the soils. Pyne also addresses the ways in which Indigenous peoples altered their landscapes through the use of fire. Knowledge and control of fire was a precondition of successful habitation of the plains. Indigenous peoples used fire as a tool to reshape their environments and meet their needs. Fire was used to facilitate hunting and manage game resources, as well as used to create and maintain grasslands and to open up forests and clear underbrush. Like Cronon, Pyne concludes that when Europeans arrived they encountered a landscape that had already been modified to some degree by human activity.

Despite the extent to which Environmental History scholarship has considered Indigenous land use knowledge and practices, it has only begun to privilege Indigenous voices or research methods in any significant way.[22] Indigenous Studies scholar Lianne

[22] Jocelyn Thorpe, *Temagami's Tangled Wild: Race, Gender, and the Making of Canadian Nature* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012).; Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jiménez, eds. *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understandings of Place* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2016).; Peter Kulchyski and Frank James Tester, *Kiumajut (Talking Back): Game Management and Inuit Rights, 1900-*

Leddy contends that while Indigenous History and Environmental History have grown along similar trajectories and often intersect, there is a "complex and still evolving relationship between Indigenous and environmental history." She recognizes Jocelyn Thorpe's *Tamagami's Tangled Wild* and Nathalie Kermoal and Isabel Altamirano-Jimenez's edited collection *Living on the Land: Indigenous Women's Understandings of Place* as examples of the intersection of Indigenous understanding, gender, colonialism and environmental history, asserting that Indigenous environmental history research must examine the gendering of environmental challenges and colonial invasions, how decolonizing research methods can represent Indigenous perspectives and understandings in environmental history and how Indigenous histories continue to impact contemporary communities.[23]

This research, like Thorpe's and Kermoal and Altamirano-Jimenez's work, answers Leddy's call. This dissertation incorporates Indigenous knowledge and epistemologies, utilizes gender-specific knowledge and examines Indigenous understanding of place. It pushes Environmental History scholarship towards incorporating Indigenous voices and their understandings of their own environments in a more concrete way.

This research, like Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser's *Bison and People,* adds to the complex narrative of the demise of the buffalo on the Great Plains and extends its temporal scope.[24] Beginning with Dan Flores' "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," in 1991, Environmental Historians such as Flores, James Sherow, Pekka Hämäläinen, William Dobak and George Colpitts have offered new environmental and economic interpretations of the collapse of the buffalo herds on the Great Plains.[25] Most prominent is their assessment of the role horses played

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1970 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).; William J. Turkel, *The Archive of Place: Unearthing the Pasts of the Chilcotin Plateau* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).; Jean L. Manore and Dale G. Miner, eds. *The Culture of Hunting in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).

[23] Lianne C. Leddy, "Intersections of Indigenous and Environmental History,'" *The Canadian Historical Review* 98, no.1 (March 2017): 83-95.; Thorpe, *Tangled Wild*.; Kermoal and Altamirano-Jiménez, *Living.*

[24] Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, eds, *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2016).

[25] Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *The Journal of American History* Vol. 28 No.2 (September 1991):465-485.; James E. Sherow, "Workings of the Geodialectic High Plains Indians and Their Horses in the Region of the Arkansas River Valley, 1800-1870," *Environmental History Review* Vol. 16. No.2 (Summer, 1992):61-84.; William A. Dobak, "Killing

in the intensification of overhunting and that buffalo numbers began declining much earlier than the 1870s. Although Flores estimates that the decline began in the 1840s, Hämäläinen contends it began even as early as the 1790s.

Flores argues that not only have buffalo population estimates been greatly exaggerated, but there were significant environmental and economic forces that served to impact their decline. The introduction of horses after 1680 and Indigenous overhunting beginning in the 1840s significantly impacted herd size. The acquisition of horses shifted tribal boundaries and allegiances and as tribes adopted an equestrian lifestyle they moved onto the Plains where horses created competition for grasslands. Increasing horse populations and environmental factors such as exotic bovine diseases, wolf predation, fire, drowning and drought also impacted buffalo numbers. Sherow also draws attention to the impact of an equestrian lifestyle on buffalo numbers. Like Flores, he contends that horse herds increased competition for grasslands at the same time as hunting intensified. Although he maintains the shift to an equestrian lifestyle impacted buffalo numbers, Hämäläinen argues that the decline in numbers was triggered by large scale overhunting resulting from advances in hunting techniques, Indigenous population increases, intensified subsistence hunting and a shift towards hunting for a commercial market [26] These numbers, he suggests were further impacted by diminished rangeland, access to winter shelter and pasture, as well as grazing competition from increasing numbers of horses.

Both Dobak and Colpitts apply these ideas to the Canadian prairies. Dobak argues that on the Canadian prairies there was no large-scale white hunt as in the United States. Instead, Indigenous hunters intensified hunting practices to meet commercial market demands. Overhunting of the buffalo was a result of human agency brought about by the market demand for tanned buffalo robes and for provisioning of pemmican to the Hudson's Bay Company York boats. Although he considers other possible explanations for diminishing population numbers, including the restriction of their range, grazing

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the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," *The Western Historical Quarterly* Vol 27. No. 1 (Spring 1996): 33-52.; Pekka Hämäläinen, "The First Phase of Destruction: Killing the Southern Plains Buffalo, 1790-1840," *Great Plains Quarterly* Vol.21 (Spring 2001): 101-114.; George Colpitts, "Provisioning the HBC: Market Economies in the British Buffalo Commons in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 43 (Summer 2012): 179-203.

[26] Hämäläinen, "First Phase," 103.

competition from horses, the impact of insects such as grasshoppers on grasslands, drought, disease, increasing human population pressures, and a hunter preference for the meat and robe of young cows, he contends that Metis hunters killed at an unsustainable rate much greater than what was needed for subsistence or for commercial trade. He asserts that Metis hunters were extremely wasteful early in the hunt, and that outdoor butchering and slaughter techniques made meat susceptible to ruin from the weather and often required more animals killed. By the 1840s, herds were diminishing on the eastern range near the Red and Assiniboine Rivers and Pembina, which necessitated the Metis moving further out onto the plains in search of buffalo. Likewise, they followed a seasonal pattern of movement from Red River to the western plains that necessitated winter settlement on the Plains by the 1860s.

In a similar manner, Colpitts argues that the reliance on the market economy was the major factor in the destruction of the buffalo on the Canadian prairies in the early nineteenth century. Market fluctuations after the 1821 merger of the Hudson's Bay Company created an environment where First Nations and Metis buffalo hunters intensified their hunts to account for drops in market values of buffalo hides and provisions. This overhunting significantly impacted buffalo numbers. Once the HBC had a monopoly, they were able to determine prices and regulate the trade by creating a standing order system and a region wide buying system that, together with their own production of provisions, served to undermine hunter's success in the trade. These constraints on Indigenous hunter's autonomy coincided with a growing need and desire for trade goods that ultimately led to overhunting to maintain their purchasing power. At the same time, this led to the commercial expansion and success of the HBC at the expense of Plains tribes and to the destruction of the buffalo on the Canadian plains. What this meant for Qu'Appelle Métis, and other Métis across the Canadian prairies, was that they entered the buffalo trade at a time when there was already increasing pressure on the herds and their numbers were already in decline. As the Metis sought to be competitive and meet market demands, their intensified and expanded hunts overtaxed and already declining population.

This research adds complexity to Environmental History scholarship dealing with

the development of the conservation movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the resulting impacts of government intervention and surveillance on subsistence livelihoods, and the ways in which local populations, including Indigenous peoples resisted, responded to and challenged this intervention. It complements ideas put forth by scholars Karl Jacoby, Tina Loo, George Colpitts, John Sandlos and others about how nationalist ideas and the application of conservation policy interacted with local environments and populations and how governments redefined legitimate land use and land tenure, meeting with social unrest and resistance by local populations criminalized for their activities.[27] Qu'Appelle Métis consistently challenged state intervention into their livelihoods, responding in flexible ways grounded in Indigenous worldview, their understanding of place and recognizable political approaches ensuring they were able to maintain their subsistence economy.

This work continues to complicate the environmental history of the Great Plains adding Indigenous perspectives and understandings. Building on Environmental Historian Geoff Cunfer's assessment of the Great Plains as neither a story of progress or decline, but as a sort of middle ground where human interaction with the environment is much more nuanced, complex and ambiguous, this work demonstrates that Métis experiences in the northern reaches of the Great Plains were complicated as they countered local, regional and national stimulus.[28] The Qu'Appelle Métis experience is one of continuity and change where they adapted their subsistence activity and livelihoods in flexible ways, responding to and resisting various government policy, legal and ideological interventions while prioritizing connections to familiar landscapes.

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[27] Tina Loo, *States of Nature: Conserving Canada's Wildlife in the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).; Brian Calliou, "Losing the Game: Wildlife Conservation and the Regulation of First Nations Hunting in Alberta, 1880 -1930" (Master of Law thesis, University of Alberta, 2007).; Thorpe, *Tangled Wild.;* George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).; John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margins: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).; Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).; Janet Foster, *Working for* Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).; Anthony Gulig, "We Beg the Government": Native People and Game Regulation in Northern Saskatchewan, 1900-1940," *Prairie Forum* 28, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 81-98.

[28] Cunfer, *On the Great Plains.*

Western Canadian and Prairie History

This dissertation inserts Qu'Appelle Métis into the broader historical narrative of Saskatchewan, Western Canada and the Prairies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and more specifically, adds to what is known about the social, economic and cultural role of women during these changing times and to what we know about Indigenous displacement, dispossession, diaspora and erasure from the landscape. The dominant narrative of Indigenous removal from the prairies in Western Canadian and Prairie history has been on the signing of treaties and the subsequent movement of First Nations on to reserves.[29] This research however, refocuses this history on Métis experiences of displacement into the twentieth century, which to date has not largely dealt with the removal of Métis from their homes except in scholarship related to the diaspora of Métis from Red River following the creation of the province of Manitoba in 1870 and after 1885 North-West Resistance.[30]

Oral histories have demonstrated that the years following the 1885 North-West Resistance were difficult for Saskatchewan Métis.[31] Many faced pernicious anti-Métis

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[29] Arthur Ray, Jim Miller, and Frank Tough, eds. *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002).; Jim Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aborigial Treaty-Making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).; James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013).

[30] Leah Dorion and Darren R. Préfontaine, "Deconstructing Métis Historiography: Giving Voice to the Métis People," in *Métis Legacy: A Métis Historiography and Annotated Bibliography*, eds. Lawrence J. Barkwell, Leah Dorion and Darren R. Préfontaine (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, Inc., 2000): 13-36.; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*.; Gerhard J. Ens, "Dispossession or Adaptation? Migration and Persistene of the Red River Métis, 1835-1890," *Canadian Historical Papers* Vol 23 issue 1 (1988):120-144.
P.R. Mailhot and D.N. Sprague, "Persistent Settlers: The Dispersal and Resettlement of the Red River Métis, 1870-1885," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* XVIII (1985): 1-30.

[31] There are numerous oral histories and oral history collections held by the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (www.metismuseum.ca) and the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan relating specifically to the Métis experience in Saskatchewan. There is also a growing body of autobiographies, oral stories, memoirs, and community histories based on this oral history, relating more broadly to Métis experience across the Prairie Provinces. One of the first, and most significant to document the Saskatchewan Métis experience in the early to mid-twentieth century is Maria Campbell's autobiography Halfbreed. See: Maria Campbell, *Halfbreed* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973).; Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Toronto: General Publishing, 1979).; Ken Zeileg and Victoria Zeileg, *Ste. Madeleine: Community Without a Town, Métis Elders in Interview* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1987).; Maria, Campbell, *Stories of the Road Allowance People* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1995).; Herb Bellcourt, *Walking in the Woods: A Métis Journey* (Victoria: Brindle & Glass, 2006).; Edwin St. Pierre. *Remembering My Métis Past: Reminiscences of Edwin St. Pierre*. (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2012).; Louise Moine Trottier, *Remembering Will Have To Do: The Life and Times of Louise (Trottier) Moine* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2013). Recently, literary author Trevor Herriot has documented Ste. Madeleine Métis experiences. See: Trevor Herriot, *Towards a Prairie Atonement* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2016). There is also a

racial discrimination from growing Euro-Canadian settler society in response to Métis actions during the Resistance. There was a stigma attached to being Métis and they increasingly felt the strain of encroaching settlement and the imposition of Euro-Canadian values and government policy. By the twentieth century, many in Southern and Central Saskatchewan found themselves displaced following the Dominion Lands Survey and the failure of the Canadian Government's homestead and scrip processes to secure Métis land tenure. Many had few options but to live in makeshift communities on newly surveyed unoccupied Crown land reserved for roads, next to First Nations reserves, or on the correction lines (adjustments to the Dominion Land Survey to compensate for the convergence of lines of longitude) (Figure 1.3). Living in these peripheral rural areas, these Métis have become known as "The Road Allowance People."[32]

growing body of academic scholarship that utilizes oral histories demonstrating Métis experiences following 1885. See: Nicole St. Onge, "Memories of Métis Women of St. Eustache, Manitoba, 1910-1980," *Oral History Forum* 19-20 (1999-2000): 90-111.; Guy LaVallee, *The Métis of St. Laurent, Manitoba: Their Life and Stories, 1920-1988* (Winnipeg: S.P, 2003).; Payment, *Free People*.; Diane Paulette Payment, "Batoche After 1885: A Society in Transition," in *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition,* eds. F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986), 173-188.; Dianne Paulette Payment, "La Vie en Rose"? Métis Women at Batoche, 1870-1920." in *Women of the First Nations; Power, Wisdom and Strength*, eds. Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 19-37.

[32] Métis author Maria Campbell has popularized the term "road allowance people" in her work of translated oral stories, *Stories of the Road Allowance People.*

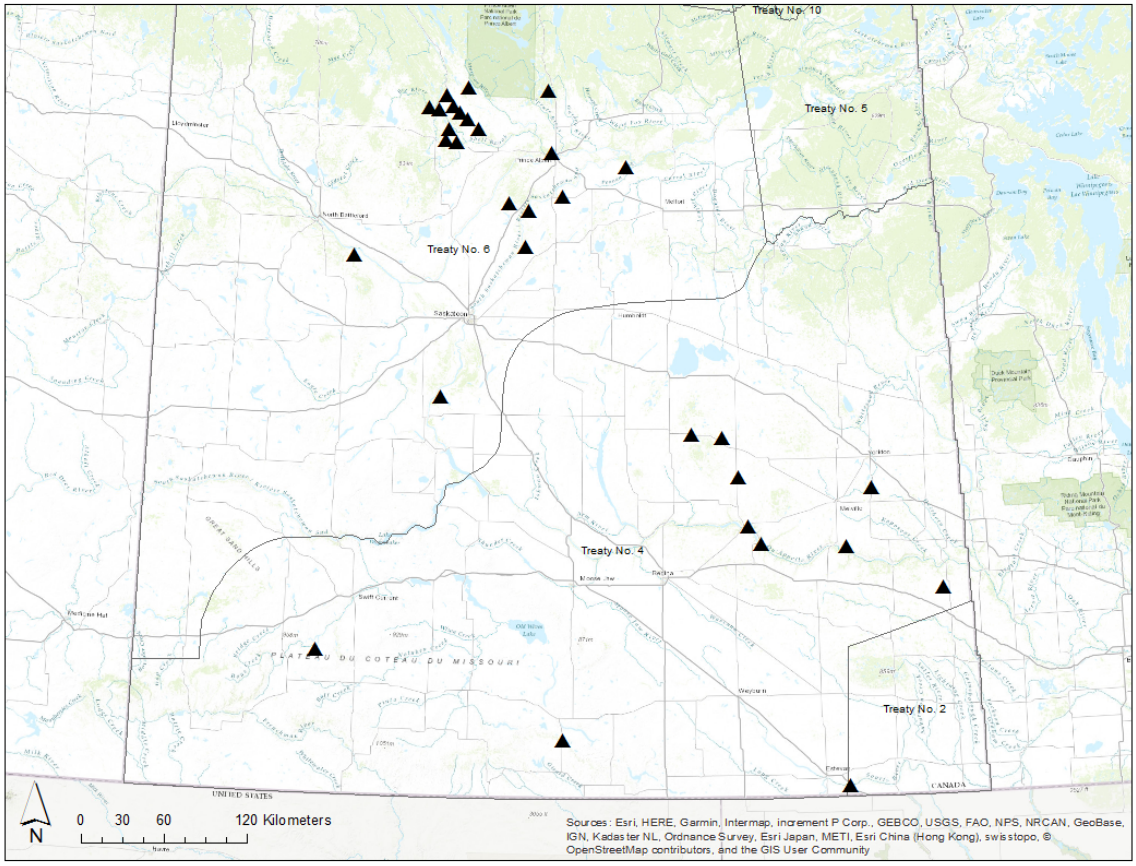

Figure 1.3: Road Allowance communities in central and southern Saskatchewan to 1950[33]

Scholarship from the 1970s-1980s addresses the commonality of Métis experience across the Prairie Provinces and is useful in contextualizing the road allowance period within a larger narrative of Métis history both spatially and temporally.[34] Movement to the road allowance began in earnest after 1885 and continued well into the twentieth century. These communities were unique to the provinces of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta, and by the early 1950s numbered in the hundreds.[35] Road allowance communities in southern and central Saskatchewan, Maria Campbell observes were "marked by small poplar log cabins and shanties strung out

[33] Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i=cubed, Earthstar Geographics, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community.
[34] Bruce D. Sealey and Antoine S. Lucier, *The Métis: Canada's Forgotten People* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publishers, 1975).; Don McLean. *Home from the Hill: A History of the Métis in Western Canada* (Regina: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 1987).
[35] Maria Campbell, "Forward," in *Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History*, eds. Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny and Brenda Macdougall (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), xiv.

along old cart and wagon trails, provincial roads, and other crown lands."[36] On the road allowance, families continued to organized themselves along extended family kinship networks and relied upon a subsistence lifestyle of fishing, trapping and gathering of wild foods supplemented by small scale agriculture and wage labour when available. Men were a cheap source of labour for local farmers, and worked to clear fields, pick rocks or potatoes. Most often, families worked as an economic unit, with women helping in the fields, as well as maintaining more domestic responsibilities of caring for the children and old people. Women's labour was crucial in harvesting, preparing, and preserving food and medicines for their families. These communities however were also places where the Michif language and Métis cultural traditions flourished.[37]

Historiography of this period however has depicted the Métis in terms of their poverty, health and social problems, as a drain on municipal and provincial welfare coffers and at odds with development of settler society.[38] Historian F. Laurie Barron argues that

> by the time Saskatchewan was created as a province in 1905, Métis communities generally were being engulfed by an unsympathetic settler society, whose ability to monopolize social and economic power cast disdain upon Native values and their way of life… It was a life of almost total destitution and poverty, and apart from the social and racial condemnation it sometimes aroused, it met with little public sympathy and government inaction.[39]

By the 1920s, as the Saskatchewan Government began implementing policies to remove Métis from the road allowances, their experience "became a horrific and untold story of bullying, cheating, burning and forceful removal."[40] Métis on the road allowance, Campbell asserts, were "left alone, out of sight, out of mind, until it was time for settlement or resource development."[41] By the 1950s, most communities disbanded as

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[36] Campbell, "Forward", xiv.
[37] Michif is the language spoken by Métis peoples in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Montana. It is a combination of Cree and French, but also borrows from English and other Indigenous languages. Métis from Michif speaking communities commonly use the term as a marker of Indigenous identity.
[38] Sealey and Lucier, *The Métis, 5.;* McLean, *Home From the Hill, 7.;* F. Laurie Barron, *Walking in Indian Moccasins: The Native Policies of Tommy Douglas and the CCF* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1997).; F. Laurie Barron, "The CCF and the Development of Métis Colonies in Southern Saskatchewan During the Premiership of T.C. Douglas, 1944-1961," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* X, 2 (1990): 243-272.
[39] Barron, *Moccasins, 7.*
[40] Campbell, "Forward," xiv.
[41] Campbell, "Forward," xiv.

individuals and families moved into cities and towns in search of employment. As communities dispersed, individuals were "lured to cities and towns with a promise of work that never materialized and, when they left for the summer, their homes were burned."[42] Increasing settlement pressure and conflict with settlers displaced others, particularly those decidedly in the way of increasing cottage, tourism and park development.[43]

Framing the Métis as Canada's "forgotten people," previous scholarship contends that "the first half of the twentieth century did not belong to the Métis" rather, they faced racism and discrimination and lived at the margins of society attempting to survive as small farmers or by living off the land in traditional ways.[44] Building on these ideas, Barron focuses more specifically on Métis in Southern Saskatchewan during the 1940s-60s under the leadership of Tommy Douglas and the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation Government.[45] Comprehensive in his treatment of Southern Saskatchewan Métis, Barron's works are significant in contextualizing the Métis experience within provincial government policy of the time and in providing a thorough examination of the social and economic situation in which Métis communities in southern Saskatchewan lived.

Gender History

This research adds to a broader discussion of gender roles and women's labour in rural communities in the settlement period and allows for comparison of experiences of Métis women alongside First Nation's and settler women's experiences. Sylvia Van Kirk and Jennifer Brown were among the first to examine the numerous and varied roles of Indigenous women in the eighteenth and nineteenth century fur trade and scholarship focused on gender roles in Indigenous communities has flourished since their

[42] Campbell, "Forward," xiv.
[43] Campbell, *Halfbreed*.; Zeileg and Zeileg, *Ste. Madeleine*.; Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan's Playground, A History of Prince Albert National Park* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1989).; St. Pierre, *Remembering*.; Merle Massie, *Forest Prairie Edge: Place History in Saskatchewan* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014).; Herriot, *Atonement*.
[44] Sealey and Lucier, *The Métis*, 144.
[45] Barron, "Métis Colonies,"; Barron, *Moccasins*.

publication.[46] Historians Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson and Patricia Roome contend however, that despite "three decades of increasingly sophisticated work in women's and gender history, popular and academic narratives of the West continue to privilege the masculine."[47] Until recently, women's work and the multiple roles women filled has been invisible in the historical scholarship, or added as an afterthought.[48] Yet, settlement of the Prairie West could not have been accomplished without the significant contributions of female homesteaders and other women in almost every area of Prairie life. Most recently, Carter's work has helped to shift this focus away from men, adding a complicated gendered perspective to Western Canadian historiography, and to the role women, including Indigenous women, played in settlement of the west.[49]

Scholarship has also overlooked women's rural wage labour experience and Indigenous women's labour generally. Historian Nicole St. Onge, in her study of twentieth century Métis women's life histories and wage labour participation in St. Eustache, Manitoba argues that scholarship detailing "the existence of an impoverished underclass of rural wage workers" has tended to be celebratory works, charting the progress or success of prairie communities without analysis of the role of rural wage labour in this progress.[50] Fewer still provide examination of Indigenous labour activity. What is missing in this body of work is analysis of the "other", the "non-proprietors"

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[46] Syvlia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwywer, 1980).; Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1980).

[47] Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson and Patricia Roome, "Introduction," in *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West Through Women's History*, eds. Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson, Patricia Roome and Char Smith (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 4.

[48] Wendy Kubik and Gregory P. Marchildon, *Women's History: History of the Prairie West Series*, Vol. 5. (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 1.; Christine Smillie, "The Invisible Workforce: Women Workers in Saskatchewan from 1905 to World War II," in *Saskatchewan History* 39.2 (1986): 62-79.; Erin Millions, "Breaking the Mould: A Historiographical Review of Saskatchewan Women's History, 1880-1930," in *Saskatchewan History*, 54 (Fall 2002): 31-49.

[49] Sarah Carter, *Imperial Plots: Women, Land, and the Spadework of British Colonialism on the Canadian Prairies* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2016).; Sarah Carter, "Daughters of British Blood" or "Hordes of Men of Alien Race": The Homesteads-for-Women Campaign in Western Canada,*" Great Plains Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Fall 2009): 267-286.; Sarah Carter, *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy* ((Montreal: McGill- Queen's University Press, 1990).; Sarah Carter, "First Nations Women of Prairie Canada in the Early Reserve Years, the 1870s to the 1920s: A Preliminary Inquiry," in *Women of the First Nations: Power, Wisdom, and Strength*, eds. Christine Miller and Patricia Chuchryk (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1997): 51-76.; Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).

[50] St-Onge, "Memories," 46.

including women and children, who had a critical role in the creation and maintenance of the rural economy.[51] Similarly, Historian Mary Jane McCallum argues that the majority of studies of Indigenous labour have been about men's labour, obscuring Indigenous women's work which has resulted in part by the "erroneous middle-class assumption that Aboriginal men were the main or sole family breadwinner and that their work counted for more than that of women."[52] According to McCallum,

> The tendency to exclude an analysis of gender in Aboriginal history is an important oversight, not only because the term and the idea of "Indian" too often represent only Indian men, but also because when gender is not made visible, we risk reproducing a history where women are absent. [53]

A history of economic systems from which Indigenous women are absent, she argues, mistakenly suggests that women either played no significant economic role or "that their exclusion from the economy was natural and not also part of the experience of colonization."[54]

There is however, an emerging body of scholarship reflecting a broader range of Métis experience including works that examine Métis women's contributions to their families and communities well into the twentieth century.[55] These works examine select Saskatchewan and Manitoba Métis communities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and provide analysis of the economic, social, political and cultural change in these communities, offering understanding of gender roles, the significance of kinship structures in community formation patterns and Métis adaptation and success in agricultural pursuits. These works also address the contributions of women's labour to the family economy through the production of artistic goods.[56]

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[51] St-Onge, "Memories," 47.
[52] Mary Jane McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2014), 6.
[53] McCallum, *Indigenous Women*, 5.
[54] McCallum, *Indigenous Women*, 6.
[55] Payment. "Batoche After 1885,"; Payment, "'La Vie en Rose'?,"; St-Onge, "Memories,".; LaVallee, *St. Laurent*.
[56] Sherry Farrell Racette, "'Sewing Ourselves Together": Clothing, Decorative Arts and the Expression of Métis and Halfbreed Identity," (PhD diss, University of Manitoba, 2004).; Sherry Farrell Racette, "Sewing for a Living: The Commodification of Métis Women's Artistic Production." in *Contact Zones: Aboriginal and Settler Women in Canada's Colonial Past,* eds. by Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherdale (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), 17-46.

Former Parks Canada Historian Dianne P. Payment's work on the community of Batoche after 1885 is particularly significant as she examines Métis efforts to maintain control over their social, political and economic systems within the larger Canadian framework after 1885.[57] She argues that prior to 1885 many Batoche Métis had begun to cultivate the land with modest results, and by the early twentieth century, some had achieved a degree of success as farmers, ranchers and merchants. Most however, struggled to adapt to their new economic realities because of conflicting ideologies about land tenure.[58]She contends that Batoche Métis took up homestead on land initially chosen for proximity to water, hay and wood lots, not for its agricultural potential. When good agricultural land was available in neighbouring municipalities, they prioritized kinship relationships over economic opportunity, choosing proximity to family and community and remaining within recognizable kinship groupings over relocation to adjoining townships where they would have access to better agricultural land. Payment's work is also significant as it underscores the importance of female kinship in community formation processes and the crucial roles women played in their families. Within the family there was a gendered division of labour where men and boys were responsible for farm work and seasonal labouring jobs that could bring in wages, while women and girls were responsible for more domestic housekeeping tasks and for cultivating vegetable gardens. Women's labour proved indispensable to the family economy.

Although not focusing on women's production related to food production or land use, there is a growing body of scholarship contributing to a broader understanding of Métis women's economic production and efforts to bring income into the family. Artist and historian Sherry Farrell Racette demonstrates how women used their artistic and domestic skills in producing material goods for sale, arguing that Métis and Halfbreed women from the early fur trade period continuing well into the twentieth century, were motivated by economic gain to provide clothing and material goods to fur traders, settlers and newcomers, and so, as cultural brokers filled a niche that continued as economies changed.[59] She provides specific examples of Qu'Appelle River Valley Métis women that

[57] Payment, "Batoche After 1885,"; and Payment, *Free People*.
[58] Payment, "Batoche After 1885,".
[59] Farrell Racette. '"Sewing Ourselves Together,".; Farrell Racette, "Sewing for a Living,".

produced and sold their beadwork, embroidery and hooked rugs in the early twentieth century bringing income into the family, demonstrating that women's artistic production was a critical component of the economy.

Sources

This research emerges from personal and professional relationships created and maintained with Métis community members over the past two decades. The teachings of Old People guides this research. I have spent many years learning from cultural teachers and Knowledge Keepers and each of these relationships has influenced my research. The term Old People is used at the request of community members, many of whom do not identify with the term Elder.[60] The relationships created with two Old People, Bob Desjarlais and Margaret Harrison, are foundational to this work (Figure 1.4 and 1.5). Bob Desjarlais was a well-recognized storyteller whose family lived in the Katepwa road allowance community and Margaret Pelletier Harrison is a talented cultural teacher and artisan who also grew up in the Katepwa road allowance community. Between 2001 and 2005, I conducted a series of interviews with Desjarlais, now housed in the Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) collection.[61] On one occasion, we spent the day driving through the Qu'Appelle Valley region with him sharing stories and pointing out familiar places. He later drew a map of the community as he remembered it growing up in the 1940s-50s. This map serves as a starting point for the spatial analysis of this community's stories and history. He passed away before beginning this study, but his stories and experiences have greatly influenced this work. During this same period, I also met and began learning from Margaret Harrison. A cousin to Bob, she helped to pick up mapping where he left off,

[60] I use the terms Old People, cultural teacher and Knowledge Keeper to recognize those that hold various forms of knowledge in the Métis community. These are terms selected by individuals I have worked with throughout this study to describe the types of knowledge they possess. This includes cultural and spiritual knowledge, teachings, oral stories, songs, ceremonies, land-based knowledge, community and family history, community genealogical knowledge and artistic practice. The term Elder has been used if requested by the individual.

[61] The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI) is the educational affiliate of the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan. GDI is responsible for the design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational, training and cultural programs and services. It has a publishing department that produces culturally-specific curricula for the K-12 education system and the general public. GDI's Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture is an extensive archival collection of Métis primary and secondary material. For more information see: www.gdis.org or. www.metismuseum.ca

walking the land and sharing her own memories and recollections of the community. Margaret was interviewed multiple times and relied on heavily for her cultural knowledge and experience.

Figure 1.4: Bob Desjarlais[62]

Figure 1.5: Margaret Pelletier Harrison

[62] Bob Desjarlais, photograph courtesy Bob Desjarlais.

Seven interviews were conducted with individuals who lived in Qu'Appelle River Valley Métis communities in the 1940s and 1950s. Selection of these participants was assisted and guided by members of the Qu'Appelle Valley Métis community. Community members directed me to interview certain individuals they recognized as holding particular bodies of family, local and community knowledge they felt important for me to gather. As a result, my decisions about who to interview and what elements of their histories to include or exclude was driven by the community.

Often these interviews took place around kitchen tables and began with time spent visiting over pots of tea. This practice helped build and maintain trust between the researcher and participant, and is a recognizable social practice in Métis communities that helps renew and strengthen existing relationships. Interviews gathered community history, information on economic and land use activity and male and female perspectives on women's roles. Using open-ended questions, participants had the latitude to answer questions in their own way, allowing me to explore ideas as they emerged from the research and for participants to share stories and memories in a conversational way. This method was particularly effective as the sharing of stories in Indigenous research, Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, "is a useful and culturally appropriate way of representing the diversity of truth within which the storyteller rather than the researcher retains control."[63] Conducted according to the ethical standards set out by the University of Saskatchewan and ways that recognize and respect Métis research ethics and cultural protocols, interviews generally followed the same structure for each participant. In addition to these interviews, this research also relies heavily on my private collection of fifteen oral history interviews with Qu'Appelle Valley Métis community members conducted between 2005 and 2010. This collection asks questions of a general nature related to cultural activity, language, kinship structures, gender roles, and community history. At the time of conducting these interviews, participants provided permission to use them for research purposes.

[63] Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999): 145.

Oral history interviews held in archival collections were also important to this study, as much of the history of Métis communities remains unwritten and in the oral record. The Gabriel Dumont Institute's oral history collection was invaluable, as it is undoubtedly the most comprehensive archival oral history collection that speaks to the Saskatchewan Métis experience. GDI's collection also includes copies of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan's oral history collections that relate to the Métis.[64] In addition to these oral history collections, there is a growing body of non-academic work, including memoirs, autobiographies and community histories based on oral accounts and focused on the experience of twentieth century road allowance Métis, and the role of women more generally[65]. Giving voice to Métis people and Métis women generally, these works reveal the racial prejudice and social and economic challenges road allowance Métis faced in the first half of the twentieth century. Not written for an academic audience, they are valuable as sources of evidence, and are not relied upon for any analysis they may provide.

Research was conducted at the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan, the Gabriel Dumont Institute, the University of Saskatchewan Library and Special Collections, the Regina Public Library Prairie History Room and the Library and Archives of Canada in Ottawa. Government records including the Dominion Land records, homestead records and survey maps were particularly valuable.

This research used a HGIS data set capturing individual and household data relating to size, composition of household, occupation, place of last residence, date of occupancy, and length of residence of specific land locations from Homestead records, Dominion Land Survey maps and federal census records. It captures household data, land improvements, livestock, and land broken and fenced. This research also used family genealogies reconstructed using federal census records and Métis scrip records, available from the University of Saskatchewan library and the Library and Archives Canada as well as various church records. This combination of records identifies Métis individuals,

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[64] Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan Collections included in GDI's collection include: "Towards a New Past", Saskatoon Native Women's Association and Batoche Centenary Project, and the Metis Oral History Research Project.

[65] Campbell, *Halfbreed*.; Adams, *Prison of Grass.;* Zeileg and Zeileg, *Ste. Madeleine.;* St. Pierre. *Remembering.;* Moine Trottier, *Remembering Will Have To Do.*

family groupings, kinship patterns, and community formation patterns and processes over time and place. In addition, these records reveal community size, movement, demographics, land use, economic activity and lend tenure at specific points in time.

Chapter Organization

This research comprises eleven chapters. Following the Introduction, Chapter Two begins with an overview of methodological and theoretical considerations and examines the intersection of Indigenous community-based and oral history research methods with HGIS methods. It describes the process of relationship building and engagement with community members to map their experiences. It demonstrates the connection between stories, places and the way Métis Old People connect their stories to familiar and specific places. Their stories serve as a jumping off point for elucidating a larger narrative about Métis history in the Qu'Appelle region.

Chapters Three and Four discuss Métis women's numerous roles within the fur trade and at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Qu'Appelle beginning in the 1850s, with close attention to their roles in the buffalo hunt as well as in gardening, gathering food and hunting small game to feed their families and in supplying the post. Chapter Three examines the social, economic and political structure of Métis families and communities in the 1860s-1870s, with consideration of gender roles in food production including discussion of the buffalo hunt and shifts and adaptation in seasonal mobility patterns. Chapter Four examines Métis employment with the Hudson's Bay Company in the Qu'Appelle Valley region, and the gradual year-round settlement of Métis along the Fishing Lakes by the late 1860s.

Together, Chapters Five, Six and Seven address broader ideas of conflicting land tenure revealing the ways the Métis challenged government interventions into their spaces. The shift toward year-round occupation in the Valley region was a relocation within recognizable and familiar territory made to maintain a Métis worldview that privileged kinship relationships and a mixed subsistence lifestyle. Chapter Five examines economic adjustment, population estimates in the 1870s and spatial organization. It also traces Métis efforts to assert their political autonomy, independence and land rights within the Canadian national framework. Chapter Six focuses on the permanent

settlement of Métis families in the Valley as they responded to increased government and settler intervention. It examines the subsequent impact of the Dominion Lands Act, Dominion Lands Survey and Homestead policy on Métis families and the way these policies served to dispossess Métis land owners well into the twentieth century. Using a dataset created from the Homestead Records, supplemented by archival and census data it addresses change and consistency in food harvesting practices, family, kinship and gender roles, spatial organization and the extent to which Métis were becoming agriculturalists from the 1880s forward. Chapter Seven closely examines Qu'Appelle Métis experiences with the scrip system and their efforts to secure land title. This chapter acts as a turning point in the narrative, after which Qu'Appelle Métis experienced widespread displacement from the lands they occupied.

Chapter Eight, Nine and Ten examine twentieth century Métis experiences where most had few options if they wished to remain within familiar territory and community structures but to take up residence on the road allowance. Métis found themselves struggling to economically survive within a growing and often hostile and oppressive settler economy while attempting to feed their families through maintenance of a subsistence lifestyle. Central to their survival is the way in which Métis women worked diligently to provide for and feed their families. Chapter Eight investigates economic activity where both men and women engaged in the settler economy in seasonal and day labouring positions. It argues that families continued to work as economic units as they had in the past and women continued to create, sew and sell handmade items as well as work as domestics outside the home. Chapter Nine assesses consistency and change in family structure and gender roles into the twentieth century paying attention to food harvesting and production. It considers the cultural context of production, gathering, preparation and sharing, including continuity in women's efforts. Chapter Ten explores interactions between Métis and state agents, such as Fisheries officers, arguing that as they faced increased surveillance and regulation of their livelihoods, Métis adjusted harvesting practices and found ways to challenge and skirt government interference so that they could continue a subsistence lifestyle. Last, Chapter Eleven reinforces the idea that Métis have always been operating within a particular worldview that privileges family and connection to land. The way these families spatially organized themselves and

utilized the Valley resources was and is crucial to how they understood themselves in this space.

Conclusion

For Qu'Appelle Métis families, kinship relationships were central to Métis worldview and how they understood themselves in this space. Métis settlement in the Valley was a continuation of past community formation and organizational structures, privileging kinship and following familiar land use and occupancy patterns. Each time these families moved within the Valley region, they resettled along extended family groupings and adapted to changing economic, social and political situations. Métis families recognized and responded in individual and collective ways to the imposition of settler colonialism, government surveillance and regulation over their lands and livelihoods. Many took up small scale agriculture as they began living in the Qu'Appelle Valley year-round and attempted to remain within familiar territory, but most had little or very limited agricultural success except with vegetable gardens. They maintained a subsistence lifestyle of fishing, trapping and harvesting of wild plants and medicines while supplementing their economy with seasonal wage labour when available. Métis undertook land use activities in the spirit of the family and ensuring the well-being of the community. Men and women filled complementary gender roles and families worked as an economic unit where all members had roles to fill and responsibilities to one another. Consequently, women made a significant contribution to the economic production of their families through their food harvesting, production and preparation activities.

Chapter Two: Reading the Landscape: Mapping Métis Stories

Stories, particularly those held in the oral tradition connect to the places and to the people who tell them. Stories define people's relationships to the land and explain their presence on it. Dakota scholar Angela Cavendar Wilson contends that stories provide a sense of identity and belonging for community members and situate them within their lineage, establishing their relationship to the rest of the natural world.[1] Grounded in the local landscape, oral history and stories about place play a central role in the construction of Indigenous histories and understandings. Métis filmmaker and oral historian Christine Welsh argues that oral history and stories are "deeply rooted in the land; [they] provide a continuity that helps to nurture and sustain the people and their way of life. In it we find the expression of their culture, values and worldview."[2] Much can be learned about a people by the way they speak about their familiar places.[3] According to anthropologist Keith Basso in his work on the Western Apache, "whenever community members speak about their landscape – whenever they name it and tell stories about it, they represent it in ways that are compatible with shared understandings of how they know themselves to occupy it.[4] For those who grew up in mid-twentieth century Road Allowance settlements along the Qu'Appelle Lakes, themes of family, community and the Valley landscape permeate their stories. Place is central in how these individuals share their stories, how they understand themselves, their history and their experiences within this space.

I began this research project with a map, hand-drawn by Métis storyteller Bob Desjarlais in 2002 (Figure 2.1). The map is a depiction of the Katepwa road allowance community as he remembered it. He drew it to supplement a series of interviews I conducted with him, including some that took place while driving throughout the Qu'Appelle Valley. As he explained his map to me, I jotted down names and what bits of information I could. The result is a visual representation of his stories and his family and

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[1] Angela Cavendar Wilson, "Grandmother to Granddaughter: Generations of Oral History in a Dakota Family," *American Indian Quarterly* 20, no.1 (1996): 7-14.
[2]Christine Welsh, "Voices of the Grandmothers: Reclaiming a Métis Heritage," *Canadian Literature*, no.131 (1991): 18.
[3] Keith Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).
[4] Basso, *Wisdom*, 74.

community history. Evident in Bob's stories and his corresponding map is the significance of kinship relationships and the Qu'Appelle Valley landscape.

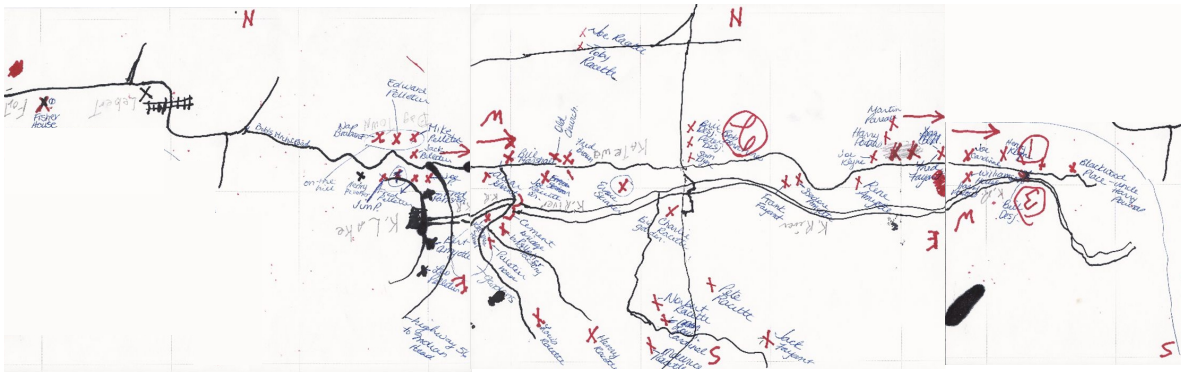

Figure 2.1: Bob Desjarlais' Map

I first met Bob in the early 2000s when employed as a curriculum developer with the Gabriel Dumont Institute in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. A colleague, Calvin Racette suggested that I meet with and interview his uncle, Bob Desjarlais for a research project I was working on. A recognized storyteller and holder of cultural and community knowledge, Bob grew up in the Qu'Appelle Valley and was a member of the extended Desjarlais and Racette family that had lived in the Katepwa Lake road allowance community. Calvin arranged for our first meeting and we visited Bob in his home. During this visit, Calvin shared that we wished to interview Bob for the research project. My introduction to Bob, through someone he knew and trusted set the foundation for our relationship. Following, I spent a significant amount of time with Bob, getting to know him and listening to stories of his family and community and visiting places important to him, all the while, asking questions, listening and laughing.

Bob was always very gracious in sharing his stories with me and we developed a strong friendship. Often, as I listened to his soft voice he would speak to me with an expression of Michif kinship, saying, "you know my girl, someone should write these stories down." In this way, he not only expressed the relationship between us and brought me into his kinship circle, but shared his wish that I record his stories, family and community history. He gave my assignment and permission to share his stories. In doing so, I have a responsibility to tell them and care for them.

Around this same time, I also met and began working with Margaret Harrison. Like Bob, Margaret grew up in the Katepwa road allowance community, and was a member of the extended Racette and Pelletier families. Margaret is an accomplished seamstress and traditional art practitioner. She practices Métis style embroidery and is one of the few remaining Métis women who continue to make hooked rugs. Her mother, grandmother and aunties, who were well-recognized in the Qu'Appelle Valley for their sewing work and hooked rugs, passed this expertise on to her. Margaret has often shared stories about the tremendous amount of work done by women in her family and that they produced these items to bring income into the family.

Like Bob, Margaret expressed to me her desire to share these stories and has given me permission to do so. In 2009, I hosted a traditional food harvesting and preparation workshop in Lebret as part of a diabetes prevention program I was facilitating for the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region. Margaret opened the day with a prayer and spoke briefly about the efforts of women in her family and community. Dedicating the day to "the women of the Valley," Margaret spoke passionately about the kind of work Métis women did in contributing to their households and providing for their families. Naming these women and honouring their memory, Margaret read a short piece she had written:

> Some of the women who lived in the Métis road allowance community at Katepwa Lake from 1940-1955 included: Rosanna Parisien and her daughters Mary, Lorraine, Bernice and Cecilia; Cora Pelletier and her daughter Ernestine; Vitaline Pelletier (Cardinal) and her daughters Philomene, Clara Wells and Josephine; Adeline Pelletier and her daughters Mary and Margaret.
>
> We honour these women, and remember their hard work to keep their families healthy. They gathered all kinds of berries: saskatoons, pin cherries, raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries and chokecherries. They picked rose hips and wild mint for tea, and many wild plants for their medicine. Their supplies spread throughout the Valley, so by wagon, buggy or walking it took a bit of travel for women to do their gathering.
>
> These women worked hard every day. They had to haul water from a well near the lake and then some had to haul it back up the hill to where they lived. Rosanna and Cora hauled water from the lake to wash their clothes if there wasn't a lot of rain water caught. Others lived close to the well and lake, but the walk to get simple drinking water was still a daily gathering.

> Whether it be the gathering of wood for their stove to cook, can and preserve their fruit, crushing chokecherries with rocks, drying berries, stewing or frying to enjoy for the season to come: they were always preparing for a new season.[5]

When she finished, she handed me the piece of paper and echoing Bob's words, shared her wish that I acknowledge these women for their hard work. This dissertation is my attempt to share these stories in a respectful, humble and meaningful way.

Research Relationships

Winona Wheeler argues that in conducting Indigenous oral history, learning requires the development of social relationships between student and teacher. Wheeler argues, that "our sources are our teachers, and the student-teacher relationship prescribes life-long obligations, responsibilities, respect and trust."[6] These relationships require reciprocal responsibility, some degree of personal sacrifice on the part of the student, and a long-term commitment. She maintains, it is the level of student commitment that "determines to a very large degree the depth of knowledge the student receives."[7] Similarly, Kim Anderson asserts that oral history research requires the creation of relationships with your sources. These relationships, she argues are paramount, as it is the quality of the relationship between the storyteller and student that determines the quality or depth of knowledge shared.[8] These are relationships created and maintained outside of the interview, the research process and academia that carry on long after the conclusion of the research project and result in student and teacher becoming "interwoven in each other's lives."[9]

Conducting oral history research in this way can be challenging. In Indigenous oral history there is an added responsibility of developing and maintaining social relationships which for some is a "totally different kind of pedagogy that requires us to

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[5] Margaret Harrison, personal communication with author, July 9, 2009.
[6] Winona Wheeler, "Reflections on the Social Relations of Indigenous Oral Histories," in *Walking a Tightrope: Aboriginal People and Their Representations,* eds. David McNab and Ute Lischke (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2005), 199-200.
[7] Wheeler, "Social Relations," 200.
[8] Kim Anderson, *Life Stages of Native Women: Memory, Teachings, and Story Medicine* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2011), 20-21.
[9] Anderson, *Life Stages*, 23-24.

learn a new way of learning."[10] The process of accessing knowledge often requires a commitment on the part of the researcher to an informal period of apprenticeship and learning as a way of building trust and developing relationships. Wheeler describes a process of apprenticeship that for her included "traipsing around Indian country, chauffeuring old people, picking berries, hauling wood, smoking meat, digging wild turnips, hoeing potatoes, or taking them to and from the grocery store or bingo."[11] It is through this type of personal service that relationships develop and she earned the stories shared with her. In her collection of Métis oral stories, *Stories of the Road Allowance People*, Maria Campbell describes a similar process of apprenticeship and long-term personal commitment to the old men who were her teachers so that she might earn the privilege of accessing and sharing their stories. Campbell writes:

> I am a very young and inexperienced storyteller compared to the people who teach me. And although I speak my language, I have had to relearn it, to decolonize it or at least begin the process of decolonization. This has not been an easy task and the journey has taken me eighteen years. I have paid for the stories by re-learning and re-thinking my language and by being a helper or servant to the teachers. I have also paid for the stories with gifts of blankets, tobacco and even a prize Arab stallion."[12]

Conducting Indigenous oral history research takes time, commitment and trust. My own research is only possible because of the time spent developing strong relationships with Bob and Margaret as well as other Métis community members in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Bob passed away before I began my dissertation but the time he and I spent together continues to guide my cultural learning and is foundational to this work. Likewise, Margaret has been one of my most significant teachers and mentors and has been an ongoing source of cultural teachings, knowledge and community history. She and I have developed a close personal and professional relationship where I have become, as described by Wheeler, "both friend and apprentice."[13]

My apprenticeship with Bob and Margaret evolved in ways like those described by both Wheeler and Campbell. Bob and I spent time visiting in the local coffee shop, driving around Fort Qu'Appelle to run errands and just driving through the Qu'Appelle

[10] Wheeler, "Social Relations,"199.
[11] Wheeler, "Social Relations," 199-203.
[12] Campbell, *Road Allowance People*, 2.
[13] Wheeler, "Social Relations," 201.

Valley sharing stories. Often, some of his friends and extended family members joined us at the coffee shop. Bob and his friends regularly teased me, and I'm sure they told some jokes and funny stories specifically for my benefit. Listening to them share their stories, I gained insight into a wider range of family and community stories and I was able to develop personal relationships with community members who also became my teachers. One of these was Bob's friend and cousin, George Klyne. George also grew up in the Valley and because of the close family relationship with Bob, they often added to and validated each other's stories.

My relationship with Margaret developed in much the same way, however, we also spent time together, attending cultural events, picking berries, and driving through the Valley picking plants and medicines, visiting friends and relatives. Since we met, I have called on her extensively as cultural teacher in my personal and professional life. She has been an invaluable resource for me and a large part of my cultural learning. Through her, I have learned to embroider, make hooked rugs, and prepare various traditional Métis foods. She has shared valuable teachings with me about the significance of women in providing for their families, working hard, persevering and making do, parenting, childrearing and taking care of their old people.

Reciprocity is central to these relationships. To honour the time and commitment each of these individuals have made to being my teachers, and to honour what I learned, I strive to find ways sharing what I have learned. This involves being present in my community and finding ways of sharing my research to the benefit of families and communities I work with. One of the ways I have accomplished this is through the sharing of archival documents with community members. For some, it is the first time they have seen archival scrip, homestead, church or government records specific to their family members. Often this has been an emotional experience for them, and myself. In some ways, seeing their family documents for the first time brings their stories to life and reaffirms what they know from the oral record to be true. For instance, when interviewing Roy Poitras, he cried seeing his family documents. A proud Michif who grew up in the Qu'Appelle Valley and lived in the road allowance community at Lebret known as Jackrabbit Street, Roy grew up listening to stories of community tensions and land

dispossession regarding his family's scrip land. These documents reflected his family's stories, confirming his own experience and that of his family and community.

In this work, there are many different types of stories that require additional research methodologies. There are family and community stories. Stories of Métis land use, gender roles, food harvesting, preservation and production, economic transition, adaptation, loss, displacement, physical upheaval, government intervention and oppression, as well as stories filled with humour, strength, cultural continuity and celebration. There are kinship stories that share family history and outline kinship relationships and obligations to one another, and there are women's stories that speak to the work and responsibilities of women as mothers, aunties, grandmothers and sisters. There are community stories that shared important events and celebrations, as well as stories about community tension and division. There are stories full of high-spirited energy, song and the Michif language, particularly those told by George Klyne and Roy Poitras. George's stories were not always historical in nature, but included funny stories, songs and dances. A well-recognized traditional Métis dancer, each time I would visit him, he sang a few songs in Michif, showed off a few of his many fancy Red River jig steps or demonstrated his square-dance calling prowess. Just as Roy and George's stories were full of humour, there were also those that were difficult to tell. Each talked at length about alcohol in the community, family breakdown, racism, marginalization and poverty. Each of the stories shared are valuable for different reasons and are the starting point for the chapters that follow.

Mixed Methods: Stories, Kinship and Mapping

As I began working with these stories and Bob's map, additional research methods emerged. I use stories shared in the oral tradition as well as those documented in the archival and cartographic record, merging oral history, genealogical reconstruction and Historical Geographic Information Systems (HGIS) methodologies. Oral histories explore social, cultural and economic traditions and reveal Métis lives, worldview and experiences. Oral history interviews, available in archival collections, and those conducted specifically for this project, provide personal and gender perspectives and experiences, and are extremely valuable for identifying kinship relationships within and

between Métis families and communities. Understanding these relationships is particularly relevant when recreating family genealogies. Family genealogies clarify the role of female kinship in Qu'Appelle Valley Métis families and uncover family and community formation patterns in a social, economic and political context into the mid-twentieth century. Genealogical reconstruction is a framework for detailed family and community studies increasingly employed by scholars of Métis history for exploring social, economic and cultural traditions.[14] Arguably, genealogical reconstruction is an Indigenous research method grounding individuals and histories in specific families, communities and spaces. Locating oneself this way is a well-recognized and culturally appropriate practice used among Indigenous peoples to understand who you are in relation to the community in which you live. Genealogies provide a framework for examining change in Métis family and community social and political structures and the movement of families over time and space. They are also useful for examining gender, evaluating the strength of female kinship in community formation and in understanding the lives of Métis women and communities generally.[15] Last, I use HGIS to spatially analyze individual, family and community experiences, socioeconomic data and land use data of specific geographic locations at multiple points in time. Through the combination of these methods I connect Métis stories and experiences to the landscape by spatially representing kinship networks, family and community roles and responsibilities and describing ways these families used and occupied their environment.

I conducted this research according to cultural protocols and made efforts to work with individuals to map their genealogies, land use activities, family and community residency patterns as well as individual stories and experiences. I followed community accepted cultural protocols that included offering a small gift or tobacco to the interview subject, recognizing and honouring their time and knowledge shared.

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[14] Diane Payment, *Free People.*; Ens. *Homeland to Hinterland.;* Devine. *Own Themselves.;* Foster, *Métis Identity.;* Brenda Macdougall, "Wahkootowin: Family and Cultural Identity in Northwestern Saskatchewan Métis Communities," *The Canadian Historical Review* 87, 3 (September 2006):431-462.; Troupe, *Métis Women.*; and, Brenda Macdougall. *One of the Family: Métis Culture in Nineteenth-Century Northwestern Saskatchewan.* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010).

[15] Jennifer S. H. Brown. "Women as Centre and Symbol in the Emergence of Métis Communities." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 3 no. 1 (1983): 39-46.

This work builds on a growing body of scholarship demonstrating Indigenous resistance and decolonizing efforts.[16] It places emphasis on decolonization as a program that challenges and dismantles colonial systems and expands Indigenous intellectual understandings of their own experiences. It links to the goals of reconciliation and privileges Indigenous perspectives, voices, worldviews and experiences. It is research that is important for communities in its methodology, and its narrative.

Métis Kinship Systems and Spaces

Métis kinship systems are fundamental to this research. Knowing who you are related to and where you come from locates individuals and histories in specific families, communities and places. Genealogical reconstruction has been increasingly employed by historians as a framework for conducting demographic history and population and economic studies since the mid-1960s formation of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure.[17] Focused on family history and household level data, the Cambridge Group demonstrates the utility of examining larger scale changes from the family or household level. One of the benefits of this type of research is that it reveals the life experiences of illiterate or marginalized peoples who left few or no written records, but appear in church and government records recording births, marriages and deaths. From this perspective, family reconstruction or genealogical reconstruction methods are useful for examining Métis lived experiences. Church records and government documents reveal traces of these experiences, and when pieced together are useful for studying family and community formation patterns and the relationship

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[16] Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*.; Kovach, *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).; Wheeler, "Social Relations,"; Jo-Ann Archibald, *Indigenous Storywork: Educating the Heart, Mind, Body and Spirit* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008)*:* Shawn Wilson, *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods* (Black Point, N.S.: Fernwood, 2008).; Kathleen Absolon, *How We Come To Know: Kaandossiwin* (Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2001).: Leslie Brown and Susan Strega, eds., *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2005): Deborah McGregor, Jean-Paul Restoule and Rochelle Johnston, *Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2018).; Chris Andersen and Jean M. O'Brien, *Sources and Methods in Indigenous Studies* New York: Routledge, 2017).

[17] Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure. https://www.campop.geog.cam.ac.uk/about/history/ The Cambridge Group was founded in 1964 at the University of Cambridge to undertake quantitative research in family history and demographic history. Focused on family or household level data, Group researchers have made significant contributions to understanding the demographic transition in Britain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

between gender and community formation and for exploring Métis social, cultural and economic traditions.[18] Historians Jennifer Brown and Brenda Macdougall argue that study of Métis communities must begin at the family level.[19] Family level studies, Brown contends are important for understanding the lives of Métis women and communities, particularly when evaluating the role of female kinship in community formation processes and practices.[20] By reconstructing the genealogies of multiple family networks within the Ile a la Crosse region, Macdougall contextualizes the broader social responsibilities created by familial and economic alliances, and in particular the role of Indigenous women in bringing outsider males into Indigenous kinship systems through marriage. Likewise, Heather Devine and Gerhard Ens have each demonstrated the usefulness of genealogical reconstruction for detailed family and community studies.[21] Using the Cambridge school approach, Ens evaluates demographic characteristics of the St. Francois Xavier and St. Andrews parishes in nineteenth century Red River, while Devine uses genealogies to identify kin groupings, sociopolitical alliances, track migration of individuals and extended families, examine socioeconomic status of families over time, and trace the acculturation process as families responded to changing socioeconomic circumstances.

I merge reconstructed genealogies of Qu'Appelle Métis families from the mid nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century with oral histories and then use the cartographic record to document residency and settlement patterns and demonstrate community formation patterns, particularly the strength and continuity of extended family systems as these families lived and moved with the Qu'Appelle Valley. Using deep mapping, I link stories, family genealogies and geographically referenced data to specific places on maps at specific points in time. This is particularly important for telling Indigenous stories and oral histories that are deeply rooted in the local landscapes and connect us to our families, communities, culture, values and worldview. The combination of these methods connects

[18] Brown, "Women as Centre," 39.; Payment, *Free People.*; Macdougall, "Wahkootowin,"; Macdougall, *One of the Family*.; Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland.;* Devine, *Own Themselves.;* Tanis Thorne, *The Many Hands of My Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1996).; Foster, *Métis Identity.;* Troupe, *Métis Women*.
[19] Brown, "Women as Centre,".; Macdougall, "Wahkootowin,".
[20] Brown, "Women as Centre," 39.
[21] Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland.;* Devine, *Own Themselves.*

people and their stories to the spaces that are important to them, privileging Indigenous value systems, perspectives and worldviews. These methods allow me to tell Indigenous stories and visually demonstrate spatial understandings and connections to specific places, demonstrating the cultural, historical and contemporary associations that existed and still exist for these families to this place.

Deep Mapping Métis Stories

Geographers distinguish between the concepts of place and space. They generally think of space as a location with no social or cultural meaning attached to it, whereas place is a location with meaning and human experience affixed to it. Environmental historian, William Turkel argues that people imbed their landscapes with history.[22] The people and events that occupy a place each bring traces of their own history to the land and in doing so, contribute to the 'archive of place'. Ideas about nature and environment then are socially, politically, culturally and, sometimes even economically, constructed. According to Turkel, "the different ways a place is imagined do as much to shape the understanding of what happened there in the past as any physical trace ever could."[23] Qu'Appelle Métis define themselves in relation to the Qu'Appelle Valley landscape, their experiences here, and the meaning they assign to these experiences. Their stories and experiences in this space form what Turkel has labeled, an 'archive of place.'

Deep mapping reveals a narrative of this meaning. Historians, particularly digital historians like David Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, Trevor Harris and others argue that deep mapping is the "essential next step" for spatial humanities research.[24] Spatial historians, Ian Gregory and Anne Kelly Knowles, concur that the future of HGIS research lies in a shift toward the qualitative.[25] Bodenhamer, Corrigan and Harris contend that deep mapping is the attempt to capture and map the narrative meanings imbedded in specific places.[26] Deep mapping moves beyond the creation of a conventional two-

[22] Turkel, *Archive of Place.*
[23] Turkel, *Archive of Place,* xvii.
[24] Bodenhamer et. al., *Deep Maps*, 1.
[25] Cooper and Gregory, "English Lake District."; Knowles, "Emerging Trends in Historical GIS."; Gregory, *A Place in History*.; Gregory and Geddes, *Toward Spatial Humanities*.; Knowles, *Past Time, Past Place*.; Knowles, *Placing History*.; Bodenhamer et.al., *The Spatial Humanities*.
[26] Bodenhamer et. al., *Deep Maps*.; Ridge, et. al. "Creating Deep Maps."

dimensional map asking, not only what is in a place but also questioning why, how and whose experiences have created a *sense* of place. It captures how people think about space and how they create meaning about specific places. It can represent multiple perspectives, identities and voices, and reveal how different individuals or groups of people have thought about places at different points in time.

Deep mapping is the detailed collection and layering of different types of data, often including multimedia depictions of a place and the peoples and objects who inhabit them. Deep maps are often heavily narrative-based, include autobiography, art, folklore, stories, and memory with the physical form of a place.[27] They

> conflate oral testimony, anthology, memoir, biography, images, natural history and everything you might ever want to say about a place…Each artifact – a letter, memoir, photograph, painting, oral account, video, and so forth – constitute a separate record anchored in time and space, thus allowing us to keep them in relationship, and each layer would contain the unique view over time – the dynamic memory – of an individual or a social unit. [28]

Katie Oxx, Allan Brimicombe and Johnathan Rush contend that deep maps, should "be able to accommodate quantitative and qualitative data, spatial data, images, video, audio (voice, music) and virtual representations of places (contemporary, historical, archaeological) and artefacts."[29] Deep mapping is a way to connect the nearly limitless range of data sources to specific locations, taking into account that as each type or source of data is added place identities change and evolve.

Shelley Fisher Fishkin argues that deep maps are palimpsests that allow us to layer multiple versions of events and experiences over one another.[30] She views deep

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[27] Trevor M. Harris, John Corrigan, and David J. Bodenhamer, "Challenges for the Spatial Humanities: Toward a Research Agenda," in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010): 174.

[28] David J. Bodenhamer, "The Potential of Spatial Humanities," in *The Spatial Humanities: GIS and the Future of Humanities Scholarship*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer, John Corrigan, and Trevor M. Harris (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010): 27.

[29] Oxx et. al. 'Envisioning Deep Maps," 204-205.

[30] Shelley Fisher-Fiskin. "'Deep Maps': A Brief for Digital Palimpsest Mapping Projects (DPMPS, or 'Deep Maps'," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 3.2 (2011): 1-31. A Palimpsest is a writing material, such as a parchment or tablet, used one or more times after an earlier writing has been erased; or, something having usually diverse layers of aspects apparent beneath the surface. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/palimpsest

maps as projects rather than simply products because they remain open-ended and invite new questions and contributions.[31] Ridge, Lafreniere and Nesbitt agree,

> Deep maps must afford open-ended exploration of a particular place…The curator of a deep map might assign various attributes to pieces of data by identifying features—churches, businesses, or residences—counting them, and assigning them their respective places on a map. Yet counting the numbers of businesses, residences, or churches gives only a few hints about the everyday practices, beliefs, and fears of the people moving through a pristinely mapped landscape. In order to support humanistic interpretation, these deep maps must be more fully situated archives in which one might find myriad traces of evidence about a site, and from these begin to build stories and arguments.[32]

As a result, deep mapping is also a methodology and a way of approaching or handling evidence.[33] It lets us reinterpret existing narratives, allowing for the construction of separate, connected and intersecting spatial narratives.[34]

Grounding Bob's Map in Métis Stories

Having spent his formative years on the Katepwa Road Allowance, Bob Desjarlais' stories focused largely on his family and memories of growing up in the Valley. He spoke at length about kinship relationships, how these families spatially organized themselves, their social and cultural practices and the economic history of his family and the Valley community. Central to the family groupings he spoke of were female kinship relationships of women who played strong, crucial roles in the family, particularly around food production and harvesting. Families grew large gardens and harvested wild plants and they fished and hunted small game. Most women were responsible for large gardens but men and children also had a role, the men in preparing the ground for planting and the children in pulling weeds and hauling water. Women processed, prepared and preserved food – contributing significantly to the family diet. They were also responsible for ensuring food was shared amongst the community, with older women often directing the male hunters when to hunt so that the Old People would

[31] Fisher Fiskin, "Deep Maps," 3.
[32] Ridge, et. al., "Creating Deep Maps," 177.
[33] Oxx et. al., *Envisioning Deep Maps,* 204.
[34] Oxx et. al., *Envisioning Deep Maps,* 206-207.

not go hungry. These complementary roles for men and women were in many ways like the division of labour when these families hunted buffalo on the plains, suggesting that these families relied on traditional practices and understandings in how they related to their environment. Bob also spoke about women who were the healers and midwives and their role in the family and community, and the way they navigated the Valley territory in search of various plants and medicines, claiming these places as Métis space. Through his stories we learn about Métis values, community practices, protocols and responsibilities to one another, while demonstrating the persistence of cultural values and kinship responsibilities in sharing resources.

The relationship between kinship and place is significant in Bob's stories. In the first interview I did with him, I asked one questions regarding his genealogy – what were his parent's names? Bob answered, but then continued throughout the interview, with no further prompting from me, to use kinship relationships to identify individuals, where they lived in relation to his household and to describe stories and events as he remembered them. For instance, in describing where he grew up, Bob began this way,

> Down in Katepwa…Down in the Valley, in the Valley that is where I lived. Grandpa Charlie Racette and Grandma Maross used to live across the bridge from us, we lived on the north side of the Valley and they lived on the south side of the Valley. Grandpa Norbert, they lived a little further down the Valley, and his family, they were all pretty well born there. But Grandpa Charlie Racette and them, there's a few of them older ones that were probably born in the reserve.[35]

Where people lived in relation to Bob and the kinship relationship that existed between them was an important aspect of his stories. Through mapping and naming, Bob recalled stories of places, events and kinship relationships used to define the bounds of his family and community across space.

Bob used kinship and place to explain how the Métis used and occupied the Valley landscape. For instance, Bob shared a story about his grandmother picking medicine,

> …My old grandfather and grandmother lived on top of the hill, and she used to go up on the hill there, and I thought once in a while she was out there digging wild turnip but it wasn't wild turnip she was after, she was after medicines. She would

[35] Bob Desjarlais, interview by Cheryl Troupe and Calvin Racette, 15 May 2002, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

> walk all over them hills and in the coulees looking for medicines. She used to walk, and she was fairly old already... That was Kokum Maross, we called her. That was Grandpa Charlie Racette's wife. Grandpa Norbert Racette was Charlie's brother, you see Kokum Maross was a Bellegarde from File Hills, Little Black Bear.[36]

This simple story of how Bob's grandmother harvested the Valley resources as medicine affirms a sense of place and relatedness, and grounds the storyteller in the local landscape.

This story also provides insight into cultural practices of naming older community members as grandparents, aunts and uncle, regardless of whether they were in fact immediate relations. Grandpa Norbert and Grandpa Charlie that Bob refers to were brothers of his paternal grandfather, Louis Racette (Figure 2.2). The naming of kinship relationships helps to define the bounds of this community and demonstrates connections to other communities. In this instance, it draws a kinship relationship between the Katepwa road allowance to individuals from Little Black Bear Reserve at File Hills.

Figure 2.2: Florence (Flora) Allary and Norbert Racette[37]

[36] Bob Desjarlais, interview with author, July 3, 2002. Kokum is the Michif word for grandmother.
[37] Flora Allary and Norbert Racette, photograph courtesy Bob Desjarlais.

Recognizing the significance of kinship in Bob's stories, I pieced together this genealogy of families and individuals only from those that he had included in his interview (Figure 2.3). The sheer number of relatives he discussed and the complexity with which he described these kinship patterns demonstrates that 'who one is related to' was an important aspect of how Bob understood himself in that place. His stories speak to the importance of recognizing the kinship relationships and the roles and responsibilities of community members in looking after one another. As kinship relationships were central to Métis values, individuals acted in the spirit of family and ensuring the well-being of community.

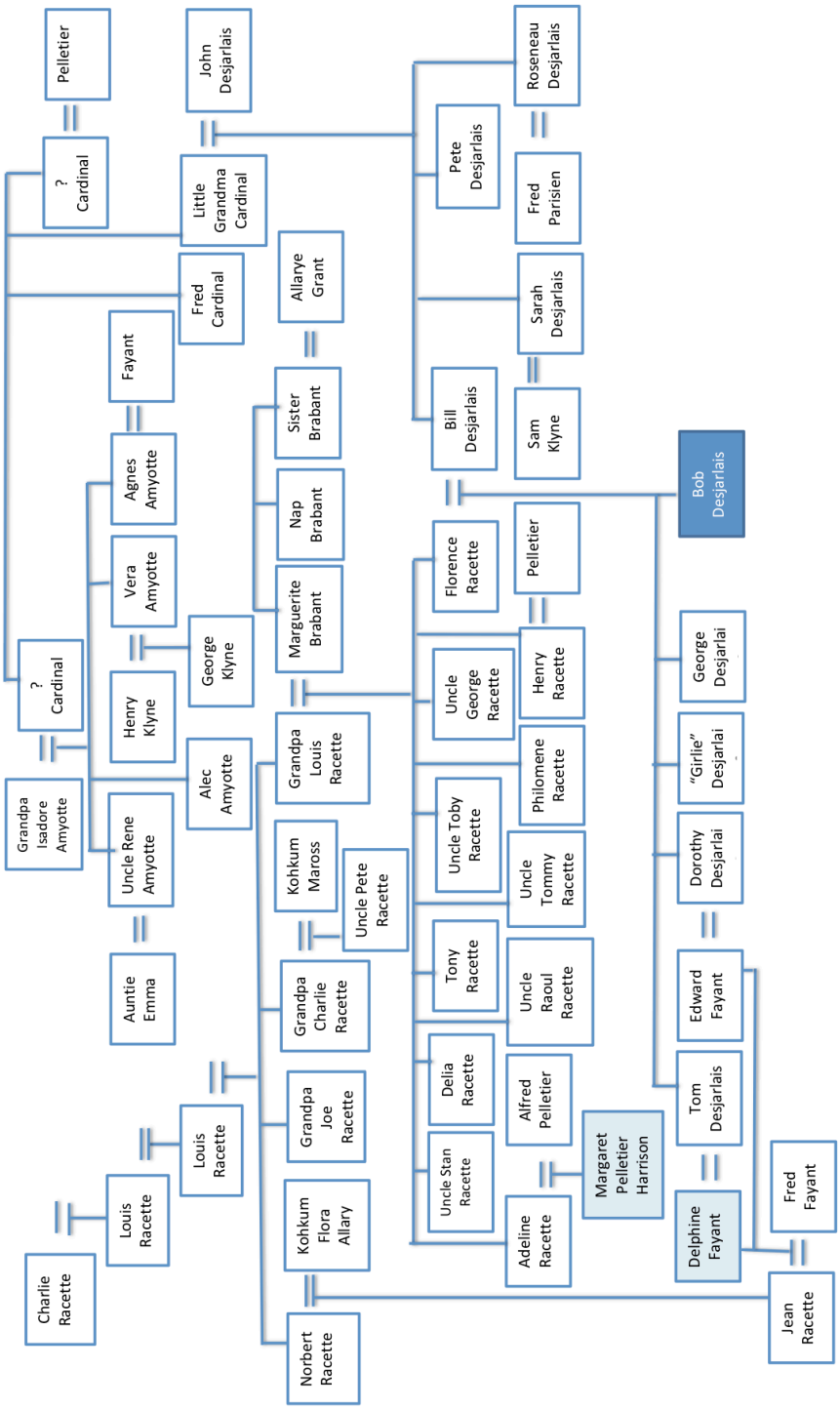

Figure 2.3: Bob Desjarlais' Genealogy (as mentioned in his interview)[38]

[38] Two parallel horizontal lines (similar to the mathematical equals sign) represent a formal or informal marriage union. Lines stemming from these symbols connect children born of these unions to their parents.

Although I had two very rich sources, Bob's stories and his map, I recognized that one was incomplete without the other. Relationships to the land take many forms. Just like I would recreate a family genealogy to determine kinship relationships, I needed to recreate this community's relationship to the land. I use stories and historical and archival documents to read for evidence of this relationship. Using HGIS methods I can plot out these overlapping spatial and familial relationships. Listening to his stories provides layers of meaning about the Valley landscape, the people who lived there, and the ways they used and occupied the space. The map, also layered in meaning, provided a sense of the spatial and social organization of the community. If I was to possibly locate some of the places where Bob's stories took place, I needed to know more about land use in this environment and I would have to try to accurately reproduce the map and verify its contents. As Bob had since passed away, I worked with others to enhance his map.

Using additional maps, I worked with community members to make a composite rendering of Bob's map, and to corroborate its contents, pinpoint locations and expand the scope of stories and land use activities. With large paper maps and handheld Global Positioning Systems (GPS) technology I was able to document and verify individual, family and community land use activity, map kinship relationships and community formation patterns. GPS technology is a worldwide navigation system where satellites triangulate specific locations according to its geographic coordinates. Using a handheld GPS unit, I pinpointed the longitudinal and latitudinal coordinates of specific places or points on a map. I worked with two additional community members, both related to Bob in some way and who had also lived in the Katepwa community. Delphine Fayant Desjarlais grew up toward the end of the Valley and married Tom Desjarlais, Bob's brother. Margaret Harrison, a cousin of Bob, grew up living in the cluster of homes along the lakeshore. I have interviewed Margaret many times and knew that her and Bob's mothers were sisters.[39] We have spent much time talking about her family history and growing up in the Valley and so, it was only natural that I looked to her as someone who

[39] Margaret Harrison and Mary Desnomie, interview by Cheryl Troupe and Maria Campbell, 30 March 2007.; Margaret Harrison, interview by author, 10 July 2009.; Margaret Harrison, interview by author, 12 February 2010.; Margaret Harrison, interview by author, 24 February 2014.; Margaret Harrison, interview by author, 9 July 2014.

could not only walk (and drive) the land with me in verifying Bob's map, but also add layers of her own meaning to the map.

In much the same way that Bob's stories are place-based narratives, both Delphine and Margaret used place to organize their stories. Speaking about women's work, Delphine described her grandmother Florence similarly to how Bob described Kokum Maross, as a respected medicine woman and midwife who traversed the Valley and its coulees picking medicines. Margaret spoke at length about her mother and aunt's work producing hooked rugs for sale.[40] The women in her family produced hooked rag rugs that her father and uncle sold across the Valley, bringing additional income into the family. She indicated that each only covered one side of the Valley as a type of sales territory to keep peace in the family and eliminate competition.

My interviews with Margaret and Delphine added layers of stories to Bob's map – but this time more accurately reflected the specific places where stories happened (Figure 2.4 and 2.5). Together we mapped stories related to extended family and community land use activity, including places where families gathered food, fished; picked berries, and places where men worked for farmers. Using genealogies, we spatially represented extended family and community formation practices within the cluster of houses along the lake, but also between clusters further down the Valley. We also mapped long-lost physical and built spaces, including the Katepwa School, church, bridges, and roads and documented stories associated with each of these places. What Bob started, Margaret and Delphine verified, collaboratively creating a geographical map of the Katepwa road allowance community that demonstrates a rich cultural, social and economic landscape of Métis experience. Supplemented with archival sources and oral histories, their map demonstrates the maintenance of family ties and relationship to the land.

[40] Delphine's maternal grandmother was Florence Allary (Kokum Flora) wife of Norbert Racette (See Figure 2.2). This is the grandpa Norbert that Bob speaks of. Bob's maternal grandfather Louis Pelletier dit Racette was a brother to Norbert (Kokum Flora) and Charlie (Kokum Maross). Margaret's mother was Adeline Pelletier dit Racette, daughter of Louis Pelletier did Racette and the aunts she spoke of included Bob's mother Florence.

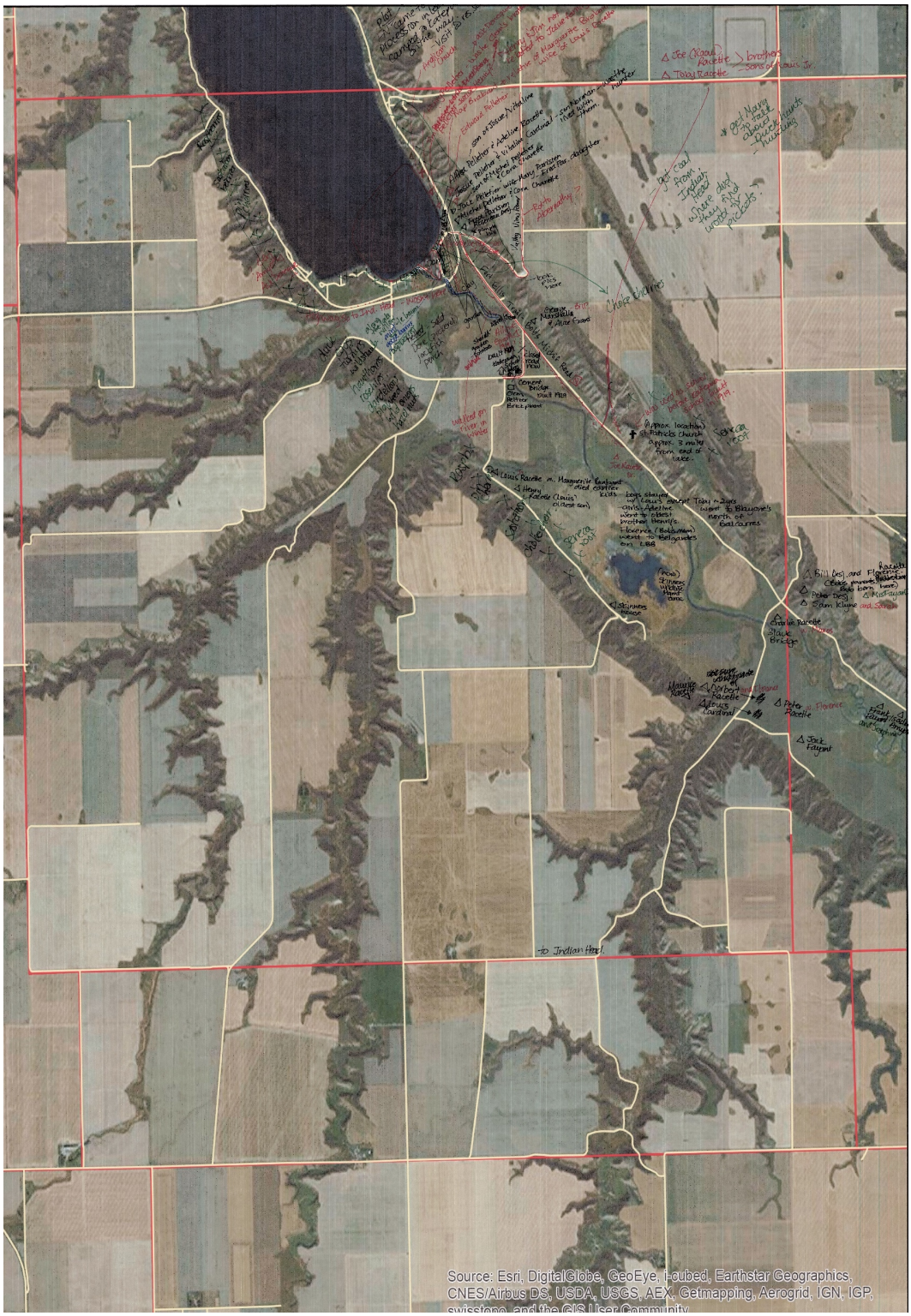

Figure 2.4: Bob, Margaret and Delphine's Map[41]

[41]Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i=cubed, Earthstar Geographics, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community.

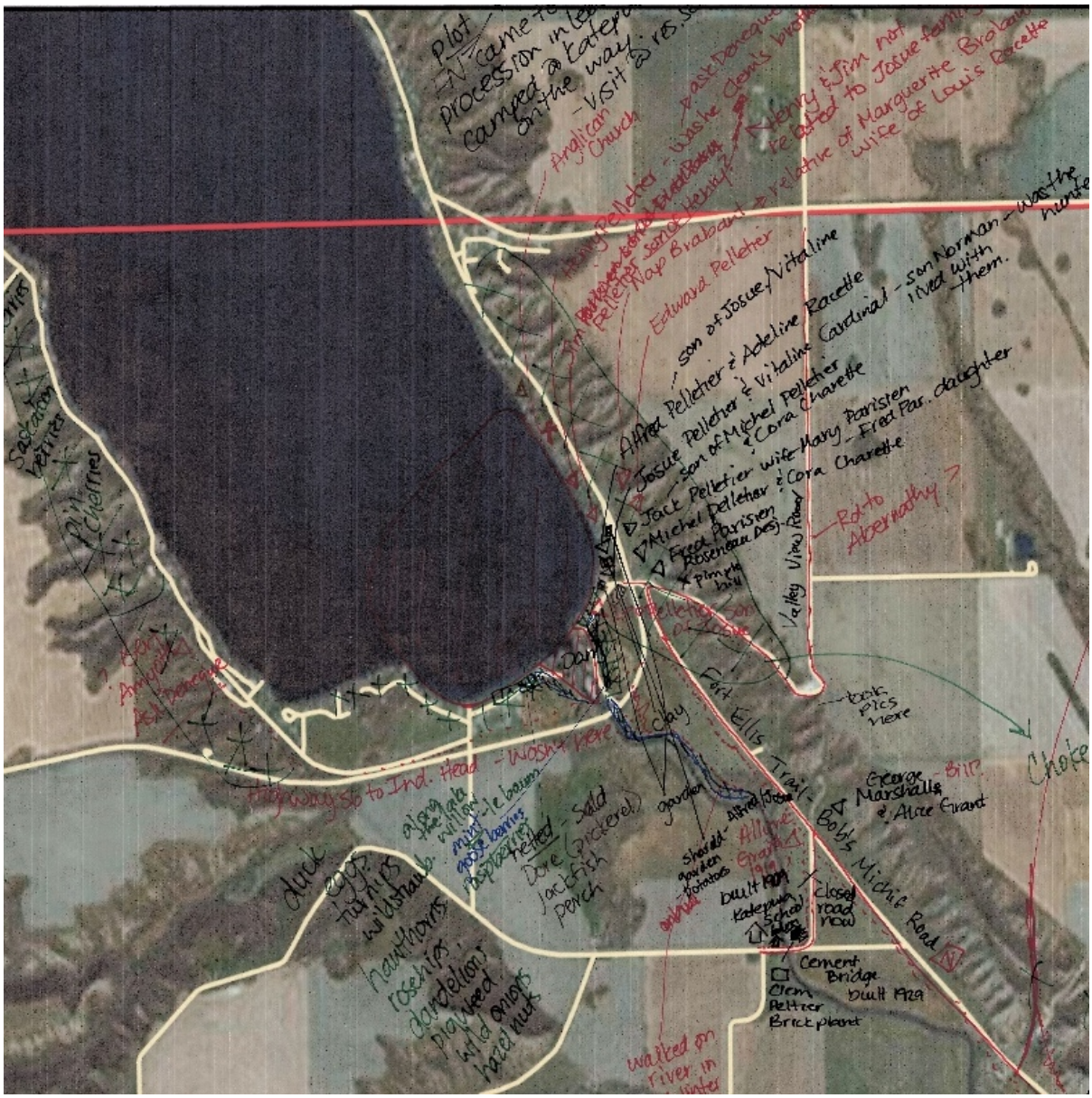

Figure 2.5: Detail of Bob, Margaret and Delphine's Map[42]

Margaret's Map

A few months after Margaret and I walked the land, she gifted me a hooked rug that she had made (Figure 2.6). The rug was not in one of the floral patterns as practiced by her mother and aunts, but was a pictorial of their family home along the shores of

[42] Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i=cubed, Earthstar Geographics, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community.

Katepwa Lake. With each element depicted on the rug she had a story to share about her experiences growing up in the Valley, about places in the Valley, the work that women did and the foods they grew, harvested and prepared. Margaret's map is both a mental map and a geographic map. With it she shared stories through her artistic practice, which is both a historical practice that ties her to this place, and a contemporary mnemonic device that allows her to remember and share.

Figure 2.6: Margaret's Rug

The scene in her rug depicts her family home, describing where they lived "snugged in close along the lakeshore" at the end of Katewpa Lake.[43] This was a tightly-knit community where all the families were directly related. They often shared resources and spent time working and socializing together. Although the only home included in the rug is a representation of her home, she shared many stories about her grandparents Josue and Vitaline Cardinal who lived next to Margaret and her parents (Figure 2.7). She also shared stories of her aunts, uncles and cousins who also lived along the lake.

[43] Margaret Harrison, interview with author, 12 February 2010.

Figure 2.7: Vitaline Cardinal and Josue Pelletier[44]

Depicting the home she grew up in, Margaret also shared about her grandparent's home. Both homes faced south, overlooking the lake, while on the north side was the road. Between the road and the house, they had a large garden. On the east side of the house there were a few large trees that she believes someone must have planted. She has included one of these trees in the foreground of the rug and suggested that it may have been a black poplar. Next to their home, she has included a one small outbuilding, an outdoor toilet. However, they also had a barn, located behind the house, where they kept their two horses, wagon and sleigh. She recounted that it was difficult to keep enough hay to feed the horses and so her father pastured and moved them around to ensure they had enough feed. They regularly relied on her uncle Raoul, who worked for a local farmer, to supply them with hay.

[44] Vitaline Cardinal and Josue Pelletier, photograph courtesy Margaret Harrison.

In addition, Margaret shared stories about her grandfather's smokehouse and her grandmother's summer kitchen. The smokehouse was where they stored food and hung and smoked fish. It was also a shed where he kept his tools and horse tack. The summer kitchen was a small outdoor space shaded by the trees where her grandmother and mother did their summer cooking, food preservation and domestic work. Each summer, her grandmother had a cookstove hauled outside so that its use did not heat up the house. She recalled that separate buildings used as summer kitchens were common with many families in the area. Her grandmother however, preferred hers outdoors. Margaret recalled that she had a table outside and that's where she made bread because it was too hot in the house. She also recalled that they regularly ate outdoors in the summer as well. Beside the house was also a large rose bush, which brought back fond memories and prompted stories of her mother, Adeline. Roses were her favorite and one of main floral designs she used to decorate the hooked rugs she made.

They kept lake water for washing in a steel barrel on the porch, and hauled drinking water from a well. She recalled that her grandmother always had a big wash stand, pail and basin ready for washing, and a dipper hung on a nail on the wall. They always had hot water because they kept a kettle on the stove, and her mother had a boiler on the side of her cookstove that kept water hot. They had a woodpile close to the house and her mother worked hard to keep it full. Often as kids, they helped by hauling wood as well. They hauled water from the lake for laundry, which they always did on Mondays. They heated water on the stove and then cleaned clothes using a scrub board in a wash tub. On Tuesday, her mother and grandmother did the ironing, using the stove to heat up the irons. They ironed table clothes, pillow cases, and all types of clothing, including men's white shirts that they wore to church on Sunday. On Saturday, women did the baking, making pies, bread and bannock. Often, she recalled that they made large loaves of bread because they rarely had more than two or three bread tins. They would use large jam pails, or whatever kind of pail they had that could go into the oven. On the rug, she has included a clothesline with freshly washed clothes hanging on it, representative of the work women did. She also included a patchwork quilt, sharing stories about how women in her family saved all the rags and old clothes they could repurposing them into blankets and rugs.

Illustrated in her rug are the vegetable gardens her family grew and some of the equipment they used. Margaret described large gardens on the north side of their house between the house and the road, where they predominately grew root vegetables such as potatoes, turnips and carrots because they could be stored longer. They also had a smaller garden where they grew vegetables like radishes, beans and lettuce. As kids, it was their job to haul water for watering and weed the gardens. They didn't have a lot of tools for working the ground, but remembers her dad breaking the ground with the team of horses, trying to work up the hard ground so that it would be better for planting. In the background, she has depicted the Valley hillside and are coulees, sharing stories about where, when and how they harvested plants, berries and medicines. She has included trees representing the various types of berries, such as saskatoons and chokecherries that they picked.

This map reflects her identity, family and community history. Margaret uses this rug to spatially document her family home, gardens, outbuildings in relation to the lake and Valley resources. She has also included symbolic aspects of her history. The four flowers on the border are representative of the floral pattern that she and the women in her family used on their hooked rugs, while the cross in the upper corners reflect the significance of the Catholic Church in Margaret's life, but also in the community. To the right of the house, she has also included an infinity symbol, a contemporary symbol of Métis nationalism and cultural pride. And so, just as Bob's hand-drawn map depicted his understanding of family and community, so does Margaret's rug. This is her map of the Valley and with it she articulates her understanding of identity, history, family and connection to the landscape. Bringing together her rug, Bob's hand drawn map, the large paper map and the place-based stories in the interviews, it is my challenge to deep map these using HGIS methods.

Mapping Stories

HGIS or Historical Geographic Information Systems– is a computer-based methodology that allows me to take different types of data with a geographic indicator or a land location, create maps and examine and analyze patterns that emerge. With these oral history maps I began to enter in data and create new digital maps. First, I mapped the

spatial organization of families demonstrating several family-based clusters. Evident are close family connections within each cluster, but also kinship connections between clusters – as first demonstrated in Bob's map and explained more fully through his stories (Figure 2.8).

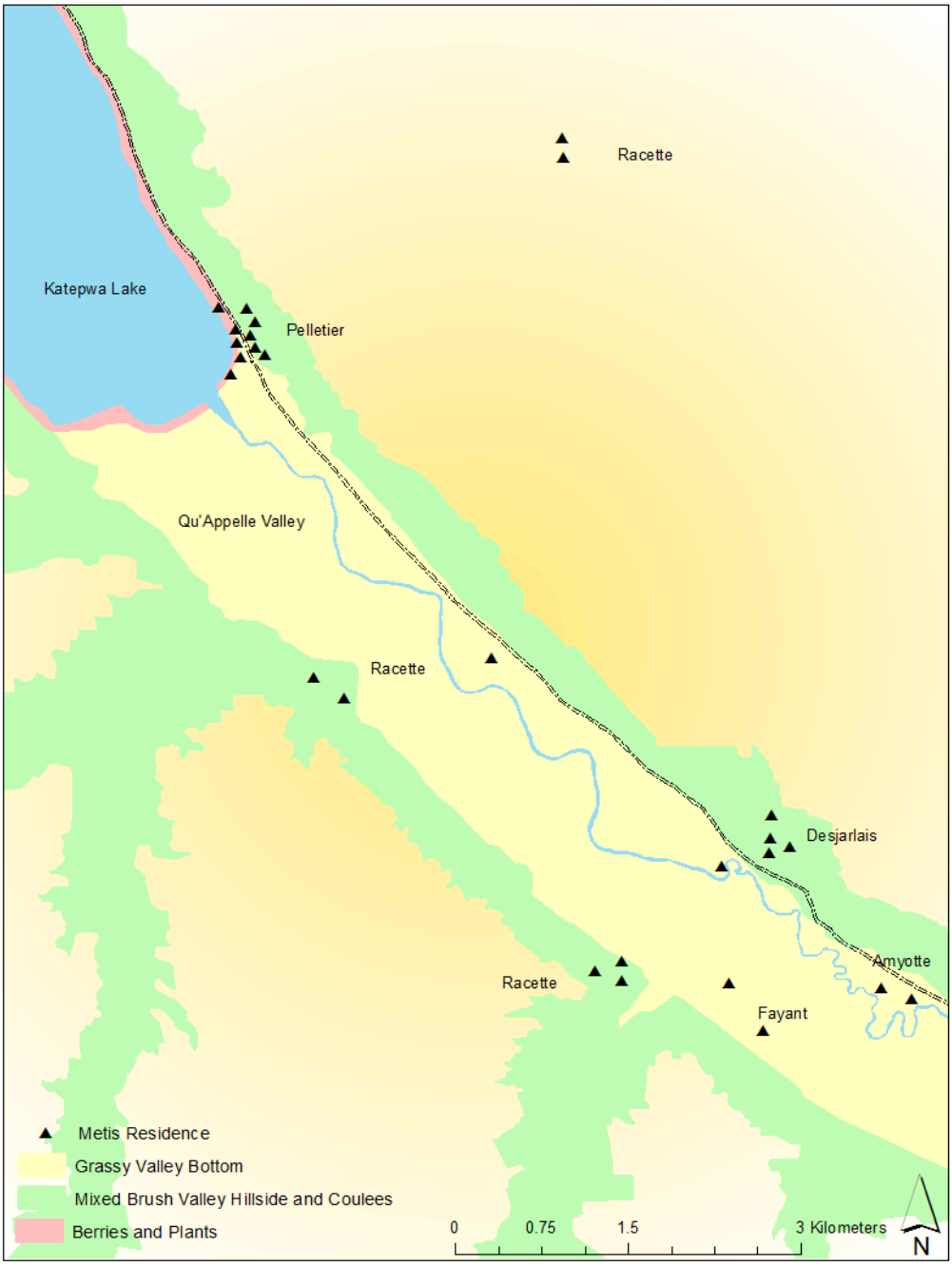

Figure 2.8: Katepwa Road Allowance Residency Patterns, 1930s-1950

Once mapped, there appeared to be a large empty space between family clusters. This space fell in the middle of the Valley in what is now a marshy area. But in the 1940s-1950s this was prime agricultural land farmed by an English settler, Ernie Skinner and his family. Bob related that most of the Métis men in the Valley worked for the Skinner family as a seasonal labour force. By mapping Skinner's land alongside Métis residences, a pattern emerged that placed Métis residences on the periphery of Skinner's land (Figure 2.9). All these families worked for the Skinner family. This also explains the two residences seemingly removed from the family clusters in the Valley. These were individuals who worked for the Skinner family, thus lived close to their job, but who remained within their extended family network in the Valley. What the map does not reflect, however, are the temporary camps of families of farm labourers who moved closer to the fields, sometimes for days, weeks or months at a time, living in tents during harvest season. When in these temporary camps, work was a communal activity where all members had roles to fill. Men's and women's roles were complementary and supportive of one another. As men worked in the fields, picking rocks, potatoes or stooking wheat, women often worked alongside them, while the grandparents and older children stayed behind at the tent settlement to watch the younger children and prepare food.

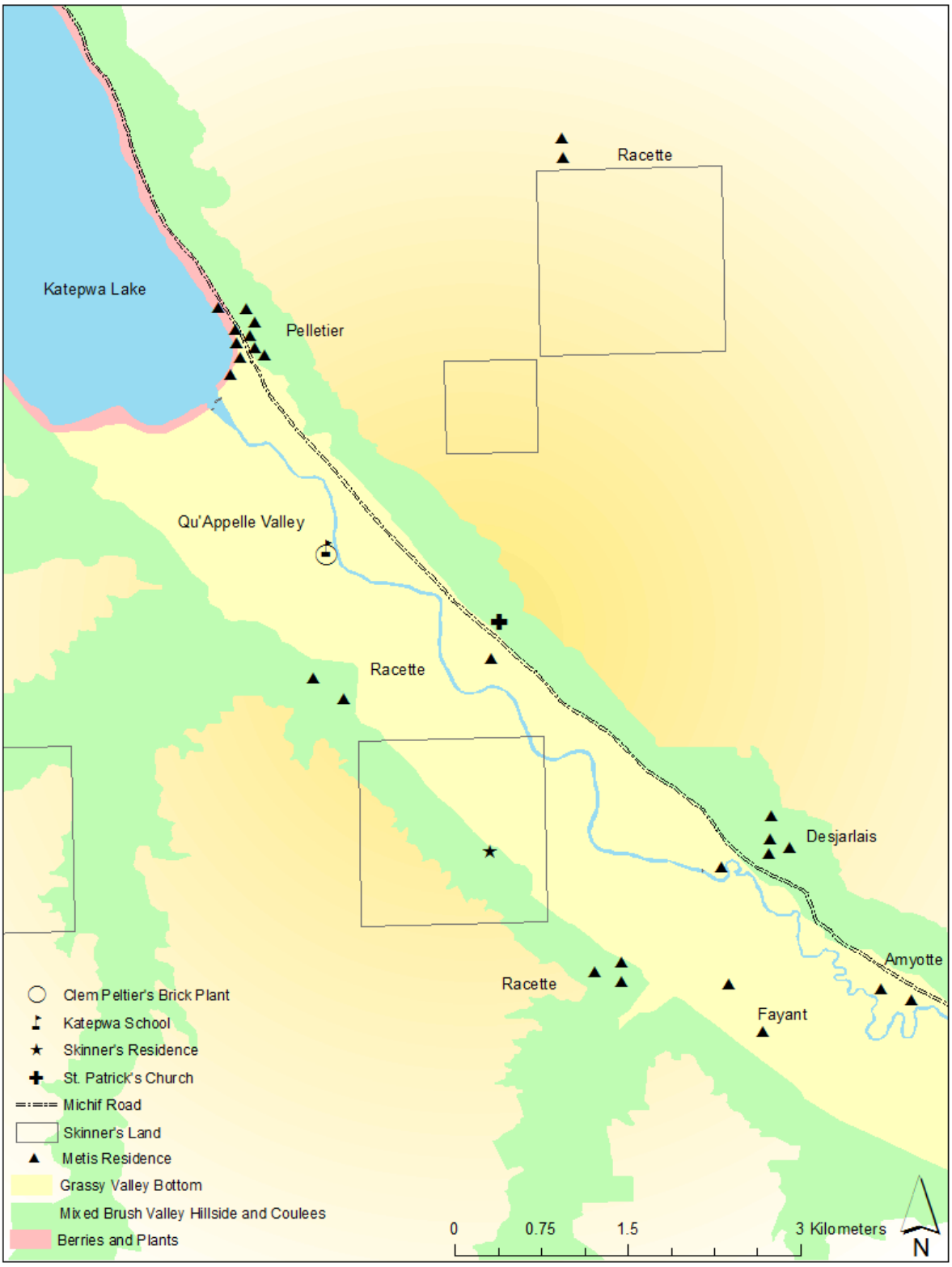

Figure 2.9: Katepwa Road Allowance and land belonging to Skinner family, 1930s-1950

When mapping land use, a clearer picture of the Valley environment emerges (2.10 and 2.11). Métis harvested all kinds of berries and hazelnuts from the bushes that lined the lakes, river, and the Valley coulees. Bob, Margaret and Delphine all shared stories of their entire family going out berry picking, collecting enough to store for the winter. Once gathered, children helped the women to crush and dry the chokecherries in little patties. Margaret pointed out places where berries were found and suggested that there was some recognition and respect for berry-patches as the territory of certain aunties and old ladies in their family. The locations of these good berry patches were often, in jest, kept secret from others. Interviews I have done with Métis throughout the larger Valley region support the idea that certain berry patches were the territory of aunties and older ladies. However, it is likely that individuals recalled these places in memory and named for the women who considered these places their "favorite spots" and not exclusively their territory.[45]

[45] Norma Welsh with Joe Welsh, interview by Sherry Farrell Racette, 7-8 February 2004, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

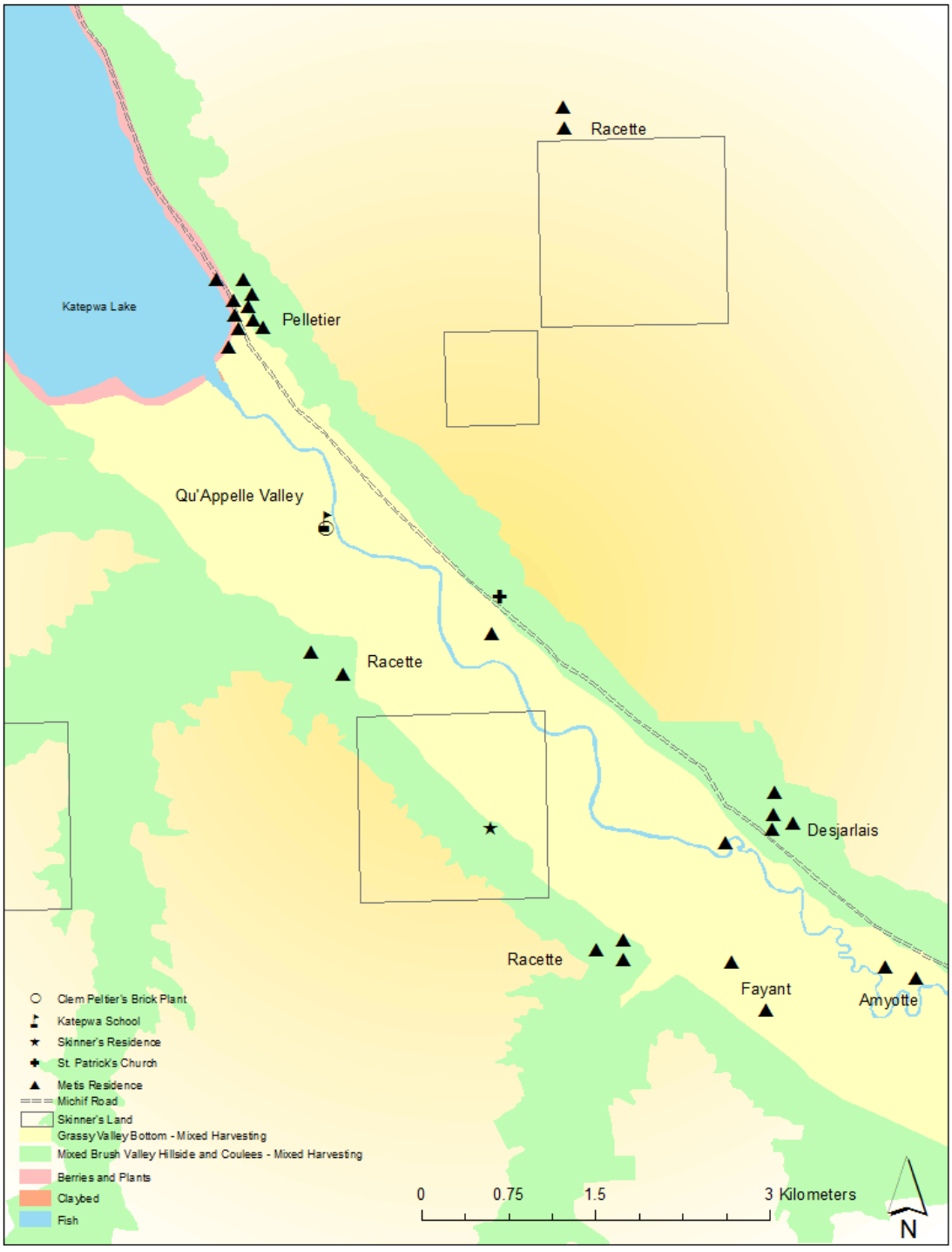

Figure 2.10: Qu'Appelle Valley Métis Land Use

Figure 2.11: Detail, Métis Land Use, Katepwa Lake

Men hunted deer and small game on the Valley hillsides and in the coulees. Delphine recalled that on the top of the hill her father would set snares for partridges or prairie chickens. Bob shared stories about his first hunting experiences and learning the ethics and protocols of hunting, particularly those about making tobacco offerings, when not to hunt certain animals, and protocols around respecting mating season, pregnant animals and their young. By following these protocols, he recognized that he was acting within a Métis worldview that privileged relationships with more than just human relatives, but also animals, the landscape and the Valley environment.

The coulees were also where families picked seneca root that they dried and sold, as well as where the old ladies harvested medicines and other wild plants. Bob recalled that his Kokum Maross often walked the coulees picking medicines and Delphine shared that she and her siblings also went along helping to dig plants and medicines, thus intimately learning about the Valley environment. Bob had suggested that women who knew medicines gathered it individually and shared their knowledge and skills across families and the community. These families, then shared food in turn with Maross in exchange for her services.

When asked about the use of the lakes and river, each spoke about the plenitude of fish caught and how families relied on fish for the winter. Men and women fished year-round, but during the fall, they netted fish in large quantities, hung them on stages to dry, and then packed in gunnysacks and stored for future use. Speaking fondly about how good the fresh fish tasted, interestingly, both Bob and Margaret indicated that they no longer trusted that the fish in the Qu'Appelle Lakes or the river were good to eat. When asked about where on the lake people fished, Margaret shared that the dam where the river and lake had always been a particularly lucky spot to fish.[46] This was also a good spot for men to hunt ducks and for children to gather duck eggs.

In mapping land use around the lake and river, Delphine and Margaret both talked about the distance to haul water for washing and for the gardens. Stories suggest that up to a quarter mile was a terribly long distance for Delphine's young, short legs. Margaret also spoke about plants that they picked along the shore, like wild mint for a tea they called, la baum, and she also located a spot at the end of the lake where there was a large

[46] I have not been able to definitively determine when the dam was built, but it was before 1911.

clay bed. Margaret was not exactly sure what the clay was used for, she did recall that her grandparents gathered it. Likely this clay, when mixed with grasses, served as chinking in log houses. This was a yearly activity, done each spring. Although Bob didn't speak about the clay bed, he talked at length about his uncle, Clement Peltier, who had a brick plant not far from the Katepwa School. Peltier made bricks here and distributed them throughout the Valley and the region. It is possible that Peltier accessed raw materials from the same or a similar clay bed.

This brick plant was one of the physical built spaces that we mapped and that held Métis stories. Others included the Katepwa school, where most of the children from this community attended, and the trails and bridges they crossed when walking to and from their relatives. I also mapped and named roads built by Métis as relief projects in the 1930s. Bob shared a great deal about the work that his father, uncles and cousins did in building the roads throughout the Valley. I named the Fort Ellice Trail according to Bob's stories and by the name he gave this road, the Michif Road.

Geographically rooting these stories in the landscape explains Métis social, cultural and economic activity as well as their values, community practices, protocols and mutual responsibilities to one another. Mapping these stories grounds these families in their territory and makes this Valley a Métis place. The families who made up the Katepwa Road Allowance community lived according to a worldview defined by their extended family networks, the responsibility individuals had to their immediate and extended family, and their relation to the geography and landscape.

Chapter Three: Buffalo Hunters and Winterers

> Now listen to the song of the buffalo hunt,
> Which I, Pierre, the rhymester, chant of the brave!
> We are Bois-Brûlés, Freemen of the plains,
> We choose our chief! We are no man's slave![1]
>
> Now, old men and wives, come you out with the carts!
> There's meat against hunger and fur against cold!
> Gather full store for the pemmican bags,
> Garner the booty of warriors bold.[2]

Written by nineteenth century Métis poet Pierre Falcon, "The Buffalo Hunt" captures the significance of the hunt in Métis social, economic and political structures. Best remembered for commemorating important events and themes in Métis history, Falcon's works celebrate the assertion of Métis rights, independence and the birth of Métis nationalism in the nineteenth century.[3] One of at least five folksongs attributed to Falcon, "The Buffalo Hunt" depicts the independent nature of the Métis and the spirit of the hunt. The song also provides a glimpse into gendered roles and responsibilities including the work of women as they and their families moved across the plains hunting buffalo in a seasonal rotation. Women played essential roles in Métis social, economic and political structures and their skill, labour and expertise, particularly around food production and preservation were crucial in feeding the family as well as to Métis success in the buffalo hunt and the trade. As a result, Métis women filled critical roles within their families and communities.

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[1] Pierre Falcon, "The Buffalo Hunt," in Paul L.A.H. Chartrand, *Pierriche Falcon, the Michif Rhymester: Our Métis National Anthem: the Michif Version* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2008), 23.; Margaret Arnett MacLeod, *Songs of Old Manitoba: With Airs, French and English Words, and Introductions* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1960), 22.

[2] Falcon, "The Buffalo Hunt," verse 15. According to verse 7 of the song, the old men referred to in verse 15, were those sent from the hunting party back to camp to get the women and carts and bring them to the site of the kills.

[3] Falcon's repertoire includes, "La chanson de la gournouillére" or "Falcon's Song", commemorating the Métis victory in the 1816 Battle of Seven Oaks. Said to have been composed while Métis were first celebrating their victory, this song and other of Falcon's body of work have been passed on orally across generations. "Falcon's Song," continued to be sung by Métis fighters to inspire courage amongst those who fought at The Battle of Fish Creek or Tourónds Coulee during the 1885 Resistance. This song continued to be passed down orally, well as into the 1950s when a version sung by Qu'Appelle Valley Métis Gaspard Jeannotte was recorded (now held in the Canadian Museum of Civilization Collection).

Historian George Colpitts argues that by the early nineteenth century, the fur trade increasingly relied on pemmican to feed the trade.[4] Calorie-rich pemmican became the main food supply for the extensive network of fur traders and voyageurs across the west, and society developed around its trade, use and distribution. Pemmican was made from meat dried until it was brittle enough to pound into a powder and then mixed with melted fat and tallow to form a paste. Often, berries were added for flavour, and extra nutrients. When still hot, the mixture was poured into airtight leather bags and sewn up to prevent spoilage. Stored this way, pemmican lasted for a long period of time, making it an ideal food for the fur posts and their employees, particularly when travelling. Although pemmican was made from meat of various large game, and even fish, it was pemmican made from buffalo that fueled the fur trade. Pemmican was an energy-dense food, containing between 3,200 and 3,500 calories per pound.[5] Although robes and hides were the main target of buffalo hunters on the southern plains, pemmican was the main commodity sought by market hunters, like the Métis, on the northern plains.[6] The pemmican trade informed Indigenous decision-making and ultimately shaped their hunting strategies. As the market expanded, prices rose encouraging increased hunters and different hunting strategies. Métis responding by adapting their hunts to meet market demands. They integrated themselves into the system, as producers, traders and consumers, and made decisions based on changes in the market.

Following the merger of the Hudson's Bay Company and the North-West Company in 1821, the HBC looked to restructure, cut costs, reassess its purchasing policies, reduce its labour force and close posts. The monopoly reformed the provisions trade and drove prices down, limiting Indigenous peoples' economic opportunities. Colpitts argues that the Métis' impetus in organizing their large buffalo hunts began following the merger and resulted of a number of complex factors including the lack of

[4] George Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire: Food, Trade, and the Last Bison Hunts in the Northern Plains, 1780-1882* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
[5] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 7-8.
[6] Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser, eds, *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2016).; William Dobak, "Killing the Canadian Buffalo, 1821-1881," *Western Historical Quarterly* 27 (Spring 1996): 33-52.; George Colpitts, "Provisioning the HBC: Market Economies in the British Buffalo Commons in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 43 (Summer 2012): 179-203.

competition in the pemmican trade, instability and subsequent failure of agriculture in the Red River Settlement, famine in the Settlement from 1825 to 1827, and a steady and increasing local market in Red River for the proceeds of the hunt.[7] The lack of market competition in the pemmican market drove prices down which, combined with a growing reliance on European goods such as guns and ammunition, encouraged the Métis to hunt more, increasing the size of their annual hunts so that they could produce more pemmican for trade. In the decades following the merger, markets continued to change, shifting toward trade in tallow, buffalo tongues and the production of buffalo robes. The insufficient trade in tallow and tongues left the Métis ready to expand their economic enterprise beyond pemmican production and into the American robe trade in the 1830s.[8]

By the 1840s, the bi-annual Métis buffalo hunts were highly organized, pemmican and robe-producing economic units numbering in the hundreds. Alexander Ross described the 1840 summer hunt estimating that it included over 1600 men, women and children, including 1210 Red River carts, 620 hunters, 650 women, 360 children, 403 buffalo runners (horses), 655 cart horses and 586 draught oxen.[9] Métis hunters generally engaged in two large collective hunts per year: in summer and late fall or early winter. Oriented toward the market, the summer hunt produced pemmican for trading to the HBC, while the fall or early winter hunt was for robe production and meat for their own subsistence. As the size and scale of the robe trade increased, the Métis often began engaging in a third fall hunt specifically for providing enough food to feed Métis in their wintering camps where they produced buffalo robes.[10]

The market demand for buffalo that increased into the mid-1800s created opportunity for Métis families and communities to act as producers in the manufacture of buffalo robes and the supply of pemmican. By the 1850s, the Métis had carved out an economic niche for themselves in supplying pemmican and robes to the HBC and to American fur posts south of the border. Not in the employ of the HBC, Métis traders acted as "freemen" or "free traders" trading outside the monopoly of the Company

[7] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 148-188.
[8] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 216.
[9] Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State. With Some Account of The Native Races and Its General History to the Present Day* (Minneapolis: Ross and Haines, Inc, 1957), 244.
[10] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 214.

asserting their independence in the trade. Historian Gerhard J. Ens argues that by this time, the market demand for buffalo robes was also increasing to the point where the Métis were increasingly being drawn into the world of European mercantile capitalism, with the buffalo hunt and robe production becoming the principal economic support for Métis hunters and their families.[11] So, by the 1850s-60s Métis families increasingly oriented themselves toward commercial production of buffalo robes, relying heavily on women's labour.[12] The increasing size and scope of the hunts encouraged Métis to seek out larger credit advances from the HBC in exchange for the proceeds of the hunt.[13]

Métis Social Structure and the Structure of the Hunt

For nineteenth century Métis, buffalo hunting was a subsistence activity, a socio-economic endeavor and demonstration of political autonomy. Organization of the hunt reflected Métis understandings of the landscape and its resources and dictated how families organized themselves so that they could strategically utilize environmental resources. Similar in nature to other band societies, Métis families lived in extended family groupings. This structure allowed them to come together with other extended families in response to labour demands when resources were plentiful. During the summer and early fall, buffalo herds were large as they moved out on the plains to feed. During the winter, they broke off into smaller herds, moving into parkland areas so that they could find food, water and shelter.[14] Grasslands had the capacity to support large herds, while the parkland's capacity was limited. So, as the buffalo herds shifted in size and scale when moving across the plains, so too did the brigades of Métis buffalo hunters that followed them.

Métis social structures and the ways in which families and by extension, communities organized themselves were instrumental to their economic success. In the hunt, Métis families organized along extended family lines, relying on the large network

[11] Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*.
[12] Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 5.
[13] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 158-166.
[14] Alwynne B. Beaudoin, "A Bison's View of the Landscape and the Paleoenvironment," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, eds. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 51-89.; Jack Brink, "A Hunter's Quest for Bison Fat," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, eds. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 90-121.

of kinship relationships created largely through intermarriage. This social environment allowed the flexibility for Métis to come together to economically provide for themselves as well as the processes and structures necessary to provide order and direction. In this way, the Métis worked together to make their livelihood, creating and strengthening kinship relationships and solidifying the social, economic and political bonds they had with one another.

The basis of Métis socio-economic organization was the extended family unit where families lived and hunted together along kinship lines. Norbert Welsh identified the members of the brigade he was a part of in the 1860s, suggesting that these extended family hunting brigades could number up to about 25 nuclear families.[15] In many instances, as I have written elsewhere and supported by the work of scholars Jennifer Brown, Diane Payment, Martha Harroun Foster, Brenda Macdougall and Nicole St. Onge, it was the kinship relationships between women that bound these families and hunting brigades together.[16] Hunting as a group, these brigades moved back and forth in a seasonal rotation from places such as White Horse Plains, Red River and Pembina to the western plains each year following the buffalo herds. Hunting together was of economic necessity dictated by the size of the herds but also because the processing of buffalo into pemmican and robes was extremely labour intensive. Additionally, living, travelling and hunting together also provided opportunity to renew bonds of friendship and strengthen kinship ties. This was an economic lifestyle, grounded in Métis social structures and in ways understood by the Métis. Indeed, scholars such as Brenda Macdougall and Nicole St. Onge demonstrate that Métis reliance on these kinship relationships and mobility are identifiable markers of Métis identity.[17]

For these hunts, extended family groups gathered with other large extended families before embarking out onto the plains together. Colpitts recognizes two divisions of Métis buffalo hunting brigades. Those that gathered at and hunted from White Horse

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[15] Mary Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1994); Welsh provides a list of the members of the buffalo hunting brigade under the leadership of Charles Trottier in the 1860s. The organization and history of this brigade is examined in more detail in: Troupe, "Métis Women,".
[16] Troupe, *Métis Women*.; Brown, "Women as Centre,".; Payment, *Free People.;* Foster, *Métis Identity.;* Macdougall, "Wahkootowin,"; Macdougall and St. Onge, "Rooted in Mobility,".
[17] Nicole St-Onge, Carolyn Podruchny and Brenda Macdougall, eds., *Contours of a People: Métis Family, Mobility, and History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2012).; Macdougall and St. Onge, "Rooted in Mobility,".

Plains and those that gathered and hunted from Pembina and Red River.[18] White Horse Plains or St. Francois Xavier is located approximately 15 kilometres west of present-day Winnipeg, on the Assiniboine River. The community was also called Grantown, after leader Cuthbert Grant who lived there, with a number of other buffalo-hunting Métis families by the 1820s. Most of the Métis families who came to the Qu'Appelle Valley were from this settlement. Pembina is located south of the Red River Settlement, at the confluence of the Red River and the Pembina River. With kinship ties amongst and between these families, the hunts could number in the hundreds and so were a significant social, economic and political undertaking. These annual hunts were highly organized, with elected leadership, strict rules of governance and gendered and complementary roles and responsibilities. The high degree of organization was necessary because of the sheer number of those present and because of the threat of attack by competing Indigenous hunters. Men were the hunters, protectors and filled leadership roles, while women provided their labour in processing of the meat and hides, as well as filling more domestic roles related to food preparation and care of the family. Although gendered, men's and women's work was complementary, equally valued and conducted to best meet the needs of the family.

Individual experience, skill and ability determined roles and responsibilities amongst those present. Appointed by consensus with authority understood and respected, formal leadership usually lasted only for the duration of a specific hunt. Despite the temporary nature, the influence and respect leaders garnered from their peers, ensured that they acted as buffalo hunt chiefs in successive annual hunts. Colpitts argues that the reputation and experience of these individuals in supplying buffalo robes and provisions to the HBC was a significant factor in leadership selection.[19] After 1821 the HBC sought out "old and reliable" hunters like Cuthbert Grant and others from White Horse Plains to provide provisions, giving them preferential treatment and generous credit.[20] Consequently, it was not only their skill and experience in the hunt, but also their

[18] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 195.
[19] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 155.
[20] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 155-159.

reputation with the HBC, connections and market access that afforded buffalo hunt chiefs their position.

Organization of these large-scale buffalo hunts ensured shared responsibility for governing, leading, guiding and protecting the camp. In addition to the leadership of buffalo hunt chiefs or captains, guides or mounted scouts guided the party and located the buffalo herds. Selected for their experience and their knowledge of the plains landscape, they served on a rotating basis, generally only holding their responsibility for a day or two. A flag flown while the camp was moving ensured the ordered movement or halting of the party. According to Ross, the guide had command of the party while the flag flew. However, once lowered, the guide's functions ceased and the captain and soldier's duties began.[21] When the party lowered their flag in the evening it signaled all to set up camp for the night. It was then the captain and soldier's responsibility to organize the camp, ensuring that all carts and individual encampments were in the proper place. When camping for the night, the Métis placed their carts in a large outer circle for protection, with wheel hubs side by side and trams pointing outward. Men, appointed as guards took their turn protecting the horses and the camp each evening.[22] Placing the carts in this position and the posting of guards was a particularly important defensive measure to protect the Métis in their long-term dispute with the Sioux.

Formal and practical laws, serving to ensure order and regulate behavior governed the hunt so not to jeopardize the success of the collective. Set out and agreed to prior to embarking, the Laws of the Hunt included strict consequences for breaking the rules. Louis Goulet described the custom of the hunt and certain rules that had the force of law during the hunt in the 1870s. These laws, he noted were necessary to ensure the order and safety of all. Accordingly,

> the first of these ordinances (in order of importance) forbade the use of alcohol, hunting on a Sunday and immorality of any kind, even blasphemy, the mildest. Leaving camp without authorizations from the council was forbidden, and one always had to wait for a signal from the guide before undertaking anything.[23]

[21] Ross, *Red River*, 249.
[22] Patrice Fleury, File A-515, Patrice Fleury Collection, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[23] Guillaume Charette, *Vanishing Spaces: Memoirs of a Prairie Métis* (Winnipeg: Bois-Brûlés, 1980), 21.

The laws described by Goulet are like those Ross referred to as governing the 1840 hunt. According to Ross, the Laws of the Hunt on this occasion were:

1. No Buffalo to be run on the Sabbath-day.
2. No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission.
3. No person or party to run buffalo before the general order.
4. Every captain with his men, in turn, to patrol the camp, and keep guard.
5. For the first trespass against these laws, the offender to have his saddle and bridle cut up.
6. For the second offence, the coat to be taken off the offender's back, and be cut up.
7. For the third offence, the offender to be flogged.
8. Any person convicted of theft, even to the value of a sinew, to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call out his or her name three times, adding the word "Thief" at each time.[24]

These laws reveal the ordered natured of the hunt and the social and moral codes used to ensure safety, harmony, respect and order while traveling and hunting together. The punishment for breaking these laws would have brought shame, dishonour and humiliation to the individual and to the family. For simple infractions, Goulet suggests that punishment may have included a fine of several skins payable to the hunt Chief who would then redistribute them to those in need or to the guards.[25] Peter Erasmus, described an incident from 1875 where buffalo hunt chief Gabriel Dumont confiscated property from Alexander Fisher as punishment for his actions in breaking the laws of the hunt. Fisher broke off ahead of Dumont's hunting brigade and in doing so, scattered the buffalo herd they were approaching. Fisher's actions forced the party to travel a significant distance further to make their kill.[26] Bringing dishonour to himself and his family, Fisher's punishment would have also redistributed wealth across the hunting party. In the case of a second offence or for more serious crimes, Goulet noted that punishment could be extremely severe, including capital punishment.[27] The laws outlined by Ross, were severe but do not include provisions for capital punishment. However, the punishments were by no means inconsequential. Destruction of the hunter's bridle, saddle

[24] Ross, *Red River*, 249-250.
[25] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 21.
[26] Peter Erasmus, *Buffalo Days and Nights* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1999), 228-229.
[27] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 21.

and coat were serious punishments that would have brought shame to the family, particularly the women as the items destroyed were products of their labour.

The Laws of the Hunt also demonstrate the importance of religious observance. Often, a priest travelled with the brigades ensuring observation of religious rituals, such as a regular mass, a blessing of the hunters before running the herd and a daily recitation of the Lord's Prayer. After striking camp each night, the leader made his rounds calling everyone to prayer at the priest's tent. According to Goulet, when all were present prayers, often recited in Latin, began:

> Acts of adoration, of thanks, requests that God continue to give us His blessings, resolutions to do more in the future to serve God and the Holy Virgin. Then after the common prayer, the Pater, the Ave, the Credo, the Confiteor, the Act of Contrition, the Commandments, Rosary one night, Litanies the next; an address by the missionary, the elevation and benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament.[28]

If no priest were present, the duty of ensuring religious observance fell upon the hunt chief, which often included the hunters kneeling and saying a short prayer before engaging in the hunt.[29]

Women's Role in the Hunt

The labour-intensive buffalo hunting lifestyle relied on both men and women to contribute equally. In the hunt, men and women's roles were complementary and it was very much a family economic activity. Men were responsible for hunting as well as leading, organizing and protecting the camp, while women processed the meat and hides and ensured that domestic life in the camp functioned smoothly. By far the most labour-intensive work women did in these buffalo hunt camps however, was to process the enormous amount of meat and hide required as robes, pemmican and dried meat to supply the trade and for their own use and consumption.

During the hunt, women, children and the elderly remained at the camp or followed behind with the carts when the hunting party chased the herds. Once killed, men and women began the exhaustive process of skinning and butchering the animals before

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[28] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 27. The *Pater*, *Ave*, *Credo* and *Confiteor* are Latin terms for common Catholic prayers including the *Pater Noster* or the Lord's Prayer; the *Ave Maria* or the Hail Mary; the *Credo* or in English, Apostle's Creed, and the *Confiteor, which* is a prayer of confession.
[29] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*,58.

transporting them back to the camp where women continued with further processing. At the camp, women processed the meat into dried meat and pemmican, dressing the skins as robes, hides and shaganappi, as well as harvesting the tendons, bones, horns and fat. Shaganappi is a Cree word describing thin strips or lacings made from buffalo rawhide. Métis used shaganappi laces for many things, including binding together the wheels of their Red River carts. Father Georges Andre Belcourt, who often accompanied Métis on the hunt, described an 1845 winter hunt of approximately 60 lodges, 300 horses, over 100 oxen and 213 carts.[30] According to Belcourt, the processing began by removing the small hump above the neck called the petite bosse then making an incision along the back to remove the hide. Butchering followed, removing the meat and fat from the carcass in various cuts, including removing the langue, or tongue and the panse, the stomach, both of which were a delicacy.[31] The HBC also purchased buffalo tongues for their own consumption and for export to American markets, particularly to cities like St. Paul, Minnesota.[32] Fat or tallow was rendered down into oil for cooking and making pemmican, while buffalo bones were broken apart and boiled to remove the marrow, which was stored in cleaned and dried bladders.[33]

In processing, women first cut the meat into long narrow strips which they worked by hand, "rolling it between their palms until the meat is about a quarter of an inch thick."[34] They then hung it on makeshift stages so that it could dry in the sun or over a small fire. Preparing the meat for drying required more than just women's labour, but also required young children to gather fuel for the fires, and the labour of older girls to keep the fires going, turn the meat and keep the dogs away.[35] Once the meat dried, women pounded it into flakes or powder and mixed it with hot melted fat or marrow and

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[30] G.A. Belcourt, "Buffalo Hunt," *The Beaver*, December 1944, 16.
[31] Belcourt, "Buffalo Hunt," 16.
[32] Marcel Giraud, *The Métis in the Canadian West, Volume II*, trans. George Woodcock (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), 134.
[33] Belcourt, "Buffalo Hunt," 16.
[34] Belcourt, "Buffalo Hunt," 16.
[35] Jock Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride: Marie Rose Smith, A Chronicle of Métis Life in the 19th Century* (Sidney, B.C.: Gray's Publishing, 1977), 35.; Victoria Callihoo, "Our Buffalo Hunts," *Alberta Historical Review* Vol. 8, no. 1 (Winter 1860): 25. Marie Rose Smith (neé Delorme) was the daughter of Urbain Delorme Jr. and Marie Desmarais. She was born in October 1861 in Saint Francois Xavier and spent most of her early life living with her parents and siblings, moving back and forth between Red River and the western prairies.

seasonal berries until it formed an even consistency. Fresh or dried berries, such as Saskatoon berries or chokecherries, not only added to the taste of pemmican, but also added to the nutrient value of the meat. Women poured the hot mixtures into buffalo hide bags that they sewed shut, flattened and left to dry. Preserved this way each bag held approximately 100 pounds of the mixture.[36] A bag of pemmican, called bulls or taureau stored easily and was highly portable making it well suited for transport and for trade.

There were generally two types and two grades of pemmican produced. Ordinary or common pemmican contained only meat and fat, while fine "bull" or pemmican contained added berries.[37] The coarseness of the meat flakes determined the grade of pemmican produced. The HBC graded pemmican made from finely ground meat as first-grade pemmican and labeled that made from more coarsely flaked meat as second-grade.[38] Regardless of quality, there was no denying the importance of pemmican to the Métis diet and economy. Pemmican preserved fresh meat from spoiling, and it lasted for months allowing for long distance trade and for stockpiling for the winter months. When hunting was poor and few other foods available, pemmican was relied on for subsistence, so much so that Rose Marie Smith remarked that often "their stock of taureaux was all that stood between them and starvation."[39] When eating pemmican, Métis consumed it straight from the bag, roasted, boiled or fried in grease.[40]

Like the preparation of pemmican, the process of tanning hides and robes was labour intensive. Women contributed the bulk of time and labour necessary for processing the hides. Men assisted with the initial processing and women cut and prepared the meat for drying, stretching, scraping and tanning of the hides. Women were experts in their processing, with skill developed over years of practice. According to Marie Rose Smith, when skinning buffalo hides, her mother Marie Delorme worked with expert skill and precision, always beginning the scraping at the neck, which was the thickest part of the hide. In scraping, "Mother Delorme followed the grain of the hide to make it soft and even. Scraping against the grain made it crusty and shiny."[41]

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[36] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 60.
[37] Giraud, *Canadian West*, 149.
[38] Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride,* 36-37.
[39] Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride,* 36.
[40] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 56.
[41] Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride,* 35.

Women prepared hides in different ways, dependent upon their intended use. They produced robes made by scraping and tanning buffalo hides on the inside, leaving the thick coat of fur on the outside. Made for trade, the Métis used robes as blankets and coverings and in making coats, hats, saddles and saddle blankets. Similarly, they prepared hides in the same way, scraping and tanning both sides, removing the hair and fur. Women used hide in making and decorating all types of garments including moccasins, saddles and hunting equipment for their families, but also for sale and trade.

When preparing hides as either tanned hides or robes, women began by stretching the hide on a frame and leaving it to dry in the sun until hard. Next, they scraped the inside of the hide with a stone, metal or bone scraper, removing the flesh before working the hide with a mixture made from animal brains, oiling the hide making it soft and pliable. If making a robe, they also removed the hair and fur, tanning both sides of the hide. When complete, they removed the hide from the frame, washed and wrung it out, and then dried and smoked it over the fire. Smoking the hide over the fire made it water resistance and darkened the colour of the hide.[42] Often the preparation of each hide required the labour of more than one individual, particularly at this stage of wringing out and stretching the hide over the fire.

Women also removed the animal's tendon from along the backbone and processed as sinew that they used in sewing, as well as in trade to the HBC. Women made sinew by first stripping, cleaning and drying the tendons and then rubbing them in the palm of their hands like how they prepared meat for drying. Moistened with saliva and twisted until elastic, the sinew split easily into very fine strands.[43] When prepared this way, sinew was strong and long lasting, making it a useful thread for sewing all types hide clothing and leather goods including pemmican bags. Women also processed hides as shaganappi, made by cutting older hides into long narrow strips that when dried was very durable and stiff. When dry, shaganappi made useful rope, cords or animal harnesses. When wet, it became pliable and used to protect the wheels of the Métis' Red

[42] Cheryl Troupe, *Expressing Our Heritage: Métis Artistic Designs* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2001), 56.
[43] Troupe, *Expressing Our Heritage*, 57.

River Carts from wear.[44] Last, Métis removed and polished buffalo horns that they made into coat hangers, ornaments of various kinds and gun powder horns.[45]

Women's labour was, then, essential to the processing of the buffalo and the production of robes, hides, pemmican, dried meat and other smaller items that when traded at the fur posts brought income into the family. Their work was demanding and messy, and did not go unnoticed by HBC clerk at Fort Qu'Appelle, Isaac Cowie. Struck by the lack of cleanliness and incessant noise that accompanied the process, Cowie described the women's efforts in the late 1860s-early 1870s. He noted women were busy for several days after "the run," drying the meat "spread on stages or on the ground without being very precise as to the grass being clean. I saw enough of the process of pemmican making that time to prevent ever having a hankering for any, unless made by people of known cleanliness."[46]

Cleanliness of processing was not the only concern the Métis faced regarding their production of pemmican. Observers often accused Métis hunters of leaving great amounts of meat to spoil on the plains. Colpitts notes that during the summer hunt, Métis, eager to kill a large quantity of fat buffalo, were selective about which of their kill they butchered. Métis hunters, he contends, may have abandoned their initial kills if they found a larger herd or a herd of fatter animals later.[47] In a 1861 fall hunt, the *Nor'Wester* reported that Métis hunters, under the leadership of William Hallett, had abandoned their large kill of buffalo bulls in favour of 600 "fine cows" they killed subsequently.[48] Colpitts also describes the organized, albeit waste promoting, outdoor butchery developed by the Métis. Focused on the market, Métis hunters developed a signature technique of harvesting only the most easily accessible and valuable cuts of meat and fat, leaving the remainder. Under the hot summer sun, it was necessary to work as quickly as possible to curb spoilage. Métis had to be discriminate with what they took, casting-off animal carcasses they deemed too skinny, sometimes taking only the hump or the tongue.

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[44] Patrice Fleury, File A-515, Patrice Fleury Collection, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[45] Patrice Fleury, File A-515, Patrice Fleury Collection, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[46] Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers: A Narrative of Seven Years in the Service of the Hudson's Bay Company during 1867-1874* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 330.
[47] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire,* 171.
[48] "The Fall Hunt." *Nor'Wester*, 15 November 1861, University of Manitoba Digitial Collections. https://digitalcollections.lib.umanitoba.ca/islandora/object/uofm%3A2744005.

They also regularly discarded summer buffalo skins that were often hairless and of little value. It was because of these techniques, Colpitts asserts that the Métis earned their reputation as great wasters of meat.[49]

Waste was often unavoidable but Métis depictions and reminiscences of the hunt demonstrate that they took care in preventing waste and spoilage. Hunter Patrice Fleury, intent of addressing the many "articles" and "stories" he had heard about the wanton slaughter of the buffalo by his fellow Métis, argues that the Métis took precautions in avoiding excess waste and spoilage. According to Fleury, "no waste was permitted."[50] In his experience, the hunting party generally killed no more than the women in the brigade could timely process, which often meant killing no more than five or six per week. [51] Given the small number of animals taken at one time, this must describe a smaller hunt by a single hunting brigade and not the large annual collective hunts. Regardless, his comments reveal that the Métis considered ways to avoid excessive waste.

Echoing Fleury's sentiments, fellow buffalo hunters Louis Goulet and Norbert Welsh argued that Métis hunters also attempted to reduce and minimize waste by being selective about when to hunt for meat or hides. The Métis preferred hunting buffalo cows because their meat was good year-round, whereas buffalo bull meat was good in winter, but poor in spring. [52] In his examination of the ethnohistorical literature of plains buffalo hunting, Brink contends that buffalo fat, not meat was most sought after by Indigenous buffalo hunters. When hunting they aimed to kill buffalo with the largest amount of body fat and had a clear preference for buffalo cows, despite the season.[53] According to Welsh, the Métis preferred buffalo cows over bulls because their meat was tender and good for making both pemmican and dried meat in the summer, while in winter they were their fattest and hides thickest. In addition, Métis hunters were also selective about animals age. The meat and hides of buffalo up to two-years of age was good quality but as they aged their hair became coarse thereby reducing the quality of the hide.[54] Regardless of the actions and preferences of male hunters in choosing which animals they killed, Goulet

[49] Colpitts, *Pemmican Empire*, 171-173.
[50] Patrice Fleury, File A-515, Patrice Fleury Collection, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[51] Patrice Fleury, File A-515, Patrice Fleury Collection, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[52] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 49.
[53] Brink, "A Hunter's Quest."
[54] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 58.

contended that they never killed more than the women could quickly dress and credits women's skills in minimizing wastage and making poor quality meat more edible.[55]

Both men and women took care to minimize waste during the hunt and Métis women had a significant role to play. Norbert Welsh recalls an incident where his wife, Cecilia Boyer, refused to process a hide, because he had brought home only the hide and little of the meat. He and his brother-in-law had been on the prairie when they spotted a small herd. Killing a cow, they skinned it for its hide and took a piece of the fattest part of the animal. Returning to their tent, he presented her with the hide expecting that she would process it. Welsh noted, "my wife smiled, and lightly kicked the hide away. She meant what she said." She had previously warned him against taking hides only for sport, insisting that "if [he] brought in an extra hide without a carcass, she would not dress it." Welsh recalled, since they were going to be making a living hunting buffalo, she did not want him to kill more than she could process. And, by her reaction, Welsh understood that she was firm in what she said. Although Boyer refused the hide, Welsh passed it on to her mother so it would not go to waste.[56]

Boyer's refusal to process the hide was an admonishment of her husband's actions and a lesson that he more judiciously caution himself against being wasteful of the resources from which they made their living. Indeed, Welsh's actions in this instance contradict his insistence Métis avoided waste. Welsh learned not to test his wife's authority over her own labour, noting he never again killed only for the hide, but always returned home with both the hide and the carcass.[57] This example speaks to the respect Welsh had for his wife and her labour and is indicative of women's authority in processing the produce of the hunt. Boyer's confident actions are not surprising given Welsh's description of her as a hard-working, independent women who even hunted buffalo.[58] He recalled an incident where he returned to their wintering site at Round Prairie only to find that she was not there, but had taken "her men" across the South Saskatchewan River to hunt buffalo. Welsh's choice of language articulated that she, and not one of the accompanying men, was leading the hunting expedition. Although

[55] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces*, 50-55.
[56] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 43.
[57] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*, 43.
[58] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter,* 76-77.

uncommon for women to hunt buffalo, this is an example of the way Métis women assumed roles and responsibilities outside of prescribed gender roles when necessary.

Along with women's responsibility in processing buffalo for trade, it was also their responsibility to set up their family's camp, organize and prepare the meals, keep the cooking fires going and make sure everyone had something to eat. Women had a significant degree of authority over decisions regarding the distribution of food across the community. It was their responsibility to share fresh meat across the extended family, so that everyone, particularly the old people had enough to eat. During the hunt, Métis men and women also made sure that old people had enough food. Following what Isaac Cowie called, "Indian custom," the Métis often allowed "old, helpless men and widow women [to] help themselves freely to the best carcasses on the field."[59] The Métis however, did not perceive their elderly helpless, rather it was out of the respect for their age, skills and expertise that younger Métis offered their elderly such care. As Cowie noted, it was older, often widowed women that provided the finest marrow fat, tallow and meat to the traders.[60] The respect older women earned was not just for their skills and expertise in processing buffalo, but also because of their knowledge of plants, medicines and healing. Often, these women were relied on to set broken bones and bandage the many injuries sustained during the buffalo hunt.[61] Thus, women's expertise, labour and the products of women's labour, despite their age, remained crucial to Métis subsistence, the family economy and their economic livelihoods.

Women worked hard caring for their families, with a constant forethought to how they would feed them in the coming days, weeks and months. In her memoirs, Marie Rose Smith recalled her mother, Marie Delorme's determination and practicality in approaching her familial responsibility. Mother Delorme, she noted, was "a resourceful provider" that often rationed their supplies of flour, sugar, tea and tobacco so that the family always had enough to eat and supplies to last while they travelled."[62] Women, such as Marie Delorme also used these opportunities to teach their children about the prairie environment. Mothers and grandmothers watched over the children and passed on

[59] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 329.
[60] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 329.
[61] Callihoo, "Buffalo Hunts," 24.
[62] Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride*, 28.

intimate knowledge of the natural environment related to the seasonal cycles of plants and animals as well as vital skills related to food harvesting and preparation. The knowledge they shared was far beyond what they taught their daughters about processing buffalo meat. Buffalo was the mainstay of the Métis diet but they also supplemented their meat supply with fish, deer, ducks, geese and small game. Men generally hunted ducks and geese and large game such as deer and antelope, women contributed to the food supply through fishing and snaring small game such as rabbits. It was women such Marie Delorme, that taught their children to fish, pick berries, gather duck eggs, dig roots and gather fuel for the fires so that they could contribute to the family economy, as well as "training them for the day they would have their own families."[63]

The Métis prepared and consumed various elements of the buffalo. The staple of their diet, buffalo meat was prepared and consumer in several ways. Fresh or preserved for later consumption, the Métis ate buffalo meat roasted, boiled as stew, as dried meat and as pemmican. They also ate the fat, bone marrow and grease as they were highly nutritious. They wasted very little, with buffalo tongues, stomach and the fetus of a pregnant cow all considered delicacies. Brink contends that muscle and fat were the major source Indigenous hunters extracted from the buffalo, followed by bone marrow and grease, which were highly nutritious. They also consumed other parts of the animal, including the internal organs, skin, blood, stomach and intestinal contents, so there was generally little waste.[64] In addition to buffalo meat, fish, wild meat from deer, rabbits and other small game, as well as bannock, tea and harvested wild foods supplemented the Métis diet. Wild foods included several kinds of berries, duck and geese eggs, nuts, wild turnips and onions that the Métis harvested fresh during their travels, or dried and carried with them with other provisions.

Shift Toward Wintering Over

Overhunting throughout the nineteenth century increasingly drove buffalo to near extinction. At a time when the herds were collapsing, market changes and reduced pemmican prices encouraged the Métis hunt more and in response the size of their hunts

[63] Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride,* 28.
[64] Brink, "Hunter's Quest," 90.

rose rapidly. So, as herd size dwindled and they increasingly moved further and further west onto the plains, Métis hunting brigades followed. By the 1850s, many had begun to "winter over" on the plains living in proximity to the anticipated wintering ranges of the buffalo returning to White Horse Plains, Red River or Pembina in the spring, rather than after the summer hunt (Figure 3.1). In these wintering villages, Métis found shelter from the weather as well as access to the buffalo, other fur-bearing animals and additional environmental resources. They continued to hunt buffalo when required throughout the winter, but on a much smaller scale. Regardless of the size of the hunt, year-round hunting practices put further pressure on the already rapidly declining herds. Historian Marcel Giraud notes the existence of a number of wintering villages in the Pembina-Turtle Mountain region in the early 1850s, arguing that they provided the opportunity for Métis "with no stock of grain" to find an "abundant and easily obtainable supply of food."[65] Accordingly, Father Georges Andre Belcourt encountered a wintering village at Turtle Mountain in 1853, numbering about 45-50 houses as well as a camp of about 400 people on the Souris River, and a large camp at Long River.[66] During the same period, larger wintering villages were popping up across the South Saskatchewan River region, the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, and the Qu'Appelle Valley, as well as smaller villages at Moose Mountain, Riding Mountain, Broken Shell Creek, Moose Jaw Bone Creek, Long Lake and High Pond, Eagle Hills, Old Wives Lake and the Dirt Hills.[67]

[65] Giraud, *Canadian West*, 153.
[66] Giraud, *Canadian West,* 153.
[67] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan. See also Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 78-79.; Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 421; and Giraud, *Canadian West,* 155.

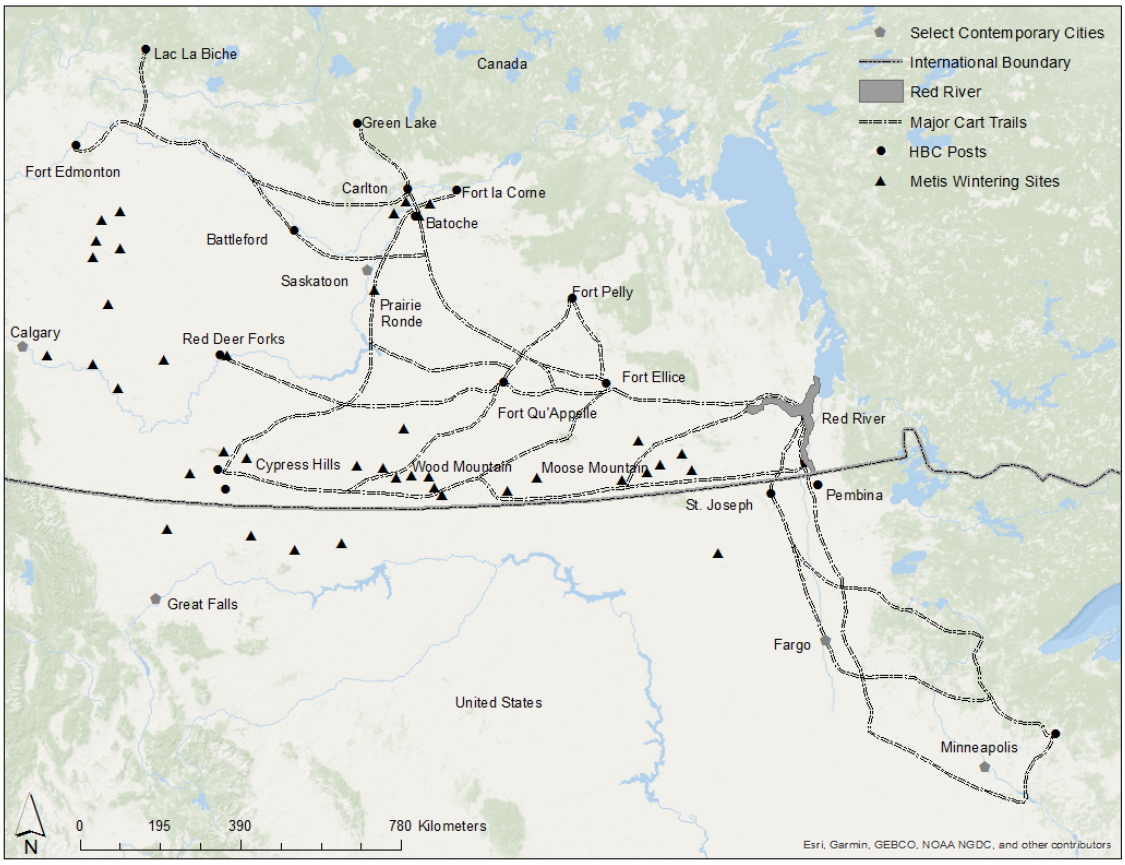

Figure 3.1: Cart Trails and Métis Wintering Sites c. 1850-60s[68]

By the late 1850s and into the 1860s-70s, Métis hunting brigades moved throughout the HBC's Swan River District, often stopping at Forts Ellice and Qu'Appelle in late fall and early spring on their way to and from their wintering grounds. Fort Ellice was located on Beaver Creek near the confluence of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers, while Fort Qu'Appelle was situated further west in the heart of the Qu'Appelle Valley on the Fishing Lakes. Due to their strategic locations each became significant stopping places and sites of commerce for Métis as they moved to and from the western plains. Each were also located within an extensive network of cart trails that moved goods and people back and forth across the plains. Stretching from St. Paul, Minnesota

[68] Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*.; Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i=cubed, Earthstar Geographics, USDA FSA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community.; Royal Canadian Geographic Society, *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada: Métis* (Ottawa: Canadian Geographic, 2018), 17.

across the Northern plains, these trails broadly defined the geography of the Métis world, connecting families, communities and economies. It was also this matrix of trails that the Métis lived, moved and made their livelihoods.

Visits to Fort Ellice and Qu'Appelle reveal a regular regional movement pattern involving many Métis and their families.[69] In October 1856, close to 30 Métis identified as buffalo hunters, freemen and traders moved through Fort Ellice on their way to wintering sites at the Qu'Appelle Lakes, Broken Shell Creek and High Pond.[70] Many of these were coming from White Horse Plains and the Red River region on their way west while some also came north from Pembina enroute to the Qu'Appelle Lakes. At Fort Qu'Appelle the following October, upwards of 80 tents camped at the Fort on their way to their wintering grounds. The largest traders among them were John Dease, George Fisher, and Daniel and Geroux [sic] McGillis.[71] In the spring, these same individuals as well as other freetraders returned east to the Red River and White Horse Plains regions.[72] Identification of individuals such as Daniel and Alexander Geroux McGillis, George Fisher, Paul Desnomie or George Racette Junior and Senior travelling with male relatives demonstrates the continued and widespread practice of travelling and living within extended family structures.

Forts such as Ellice and Qu'Appelle remained important economic sites as the significance of Métis wintering villages as sites of production, commerce and trade increased. In their wintering villages, women continued their animal processing work, although at a less intense pace. They spent little time in winter making pemmican, but continued to dry meat and tan hides. Women remained responsible for feeding their

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[69] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

[70] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan. Freemen such as Antoine Gingras, Adott Antoine Gladu, F. Delorme, Francois Garneau, Joseph Hamelin, Gabriel Frederich, George Fisher and brother, Daniel and brother Alexander Geroux McGillis, John Sinclair, Joseph Tomma, Paul Desnomie, and a young man listed only by his surname Breland were among those who moved through the Fort Ellice region on their way to the Qu'Appelle Lakes, while others such as George Racette senior and son, George "Shaman" Racette, Alex Fisher, Joseph and John Desmarais visited Ellice on their way to Broken Shell Creek and William Daniel, Akapow, John McKay, John Fisher, Laframboise and son, Marshall Desjarlais and Gabriel LaBoucan stopped at the Fort on their way to High Pond

[71] Journal of Qu'Appelle Lake Post, 1857-1858, M-1531, Glenbow Archives.

[72] Journal of Qu'Appelle Lake Post, 1857-1858, M-1531, Glenbow Archives. These include freemen listed only by surname Belguard, LaPierre, Bon Guardipe, and Davis as well as John Fisher, Michel Fridmand and Narcipe Green.

families, rationing dried meat and pemmican resources stored during the spring and summer. They also took advantage of cold weather to preserve fresh meat. During the winter, women dried fresh meat within their small cabins by hanging strips of meat on makeshift scaffolds, or, more often, by freezing it for later consumption. Women remained busy in their food production and preservation activities throughout the winter months and dedicated a significant amount of their time to making all types of clothes, moccasins, bags and saddles which they decorated with elaborate floral beadwork and silk and quill embroidery. Used within the family or sold to the HBC, these items brought additional income into the household.[73]

Métis in these villages were not only buffalo hunters, but many also acted as itinerant freetraders outside the employ of the HBC, yet carrying out a prosperous trade throughout their travels. Métis freetraders supplied extended family members with trade goods, generally in exchange for the hides of buffalo hunted during the winter. They continued to rely on their large annual hunts for subsistence and the production of robes and pemmican, as well as hunting during the winter when necessary. Hunts from their wintering villages however, were of a restricted and limited nature, taking few or solitary animals at a time, and only those to meet their immediate food or trading needs.

Competition from Métis freetraders was a concern for the HBC, particularly in the wintering villages. The HBC first responded by establishing semi-permanent seasonal outposts or "flying posts" in or near the Métis encampments to attract trade and neutralize competition.[74] Throughout the 1860s and into the early 1870s, HBC employees of Forts Ellice and Qu'Appelle regularly travelled to the winter encampments on both short trading excursions and for the season, spending the winter acquiring furs and provisions such as pemmican, dried meat, and bladders of grease, particularly when provisions were low at the Forts. The HBC sent traders from Fort Ellice to Moose Mountain and Wood Mountain, as well as to smaller camps at Long Creek and Pipestone Creek, in present-day southern Saskatchewan. They selected employees to work the seasonal posts based on an individual's history with the HBC, their trading expertise, but also because of kinship

[73] For a detailed examination of Métis women's economic production of decorative leather clothing and goods, see: Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves Together,".
[74] Archibald McDonald to James Graham, 13 June 1874, Fort Ellice, Report on Districts. B.63/b/1, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

relationships that extended into these villages. The HBC looked to these employees to leverage familial relationships in benefit of the trade. During the late 1850s, Chief Factor William McKay at Fort Ellice dispatched "Old Antoine Desjarlais" to Moose Mountain for the winter trading season. A seasoned and experienced trader, Desjarlais began working with the HBC as an interpreter and later as a trader at Lesser Slave Lake in 1815. From there, he migrated eastward to the Swan River and Souris River regions where he established two independent trading posts in defiance of the HBC monopoly. From 1836 to 40, he operated Fort Desjarlais on the Souris River near present-day Brandon, Manitoba. He operated this with his brother, Marcel, his son Baptiste and sons-in-law Charles DeMontigny, Eusebe Ledoux and Simon Blondeau, and was home to about 70 individuals.[75] By the early 1850s, Desjarlais was again working for the HBC, this time in the Swan River District. In winter 1858 under the direction of the HBC, he and two additional men lived and traded amongst the Métis at Moose Mountain.

Desjarlais' time at Moose Mountain was quite profitable for the HBC, both in terms of furs and provisions. On two short trading trips in November 1858, HBC employees travelled to the village to deliver Desjarlais a supply of trade goods in exchange for the furs he had acquired. They returned to the post with furs totaling 99 foxes, 153 kitt foxes, 318 skunks, 116 badgers, nine wolves and two buffalo robes.[76] Later the same winter, the post dispatched a party of five men, led by Jean Baptiste Bourassa, also an experienced and long-term employee of the HBC to Moose Mountain seeking any fresh meat provisions Desjarlais had to spare. Each of the five-member party set out with their own dog train, returning with no meat but each with a sled loaded with robes, wolves, foxes, skunks and kitt foxes.[77] Desjarlais' success of the trade speaks not only to his skill and experience as a trader, but also to the size of the wintering village and the success of the Métis hunters passing the winter there.

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[75] For a detailed examination of the Desjarlais family, see: Devine, *Own Themselves, 130-133.;* Heather Devine, "Les Desjarlais: The Development and Disperson of a Proto-Métis Hunting Band, 1785-1870," in Theodore Binnema, Gerhard J. Ens and R.C. MacLeod, eds. *From Rupert's Land to Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2001), 129-160.
[76] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, November 1858, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[77] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 16 February 1858, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

Métis buffalo hunters and freetraders in the wintering villages appreciated this pattern of trade, as Fort Ellice's Chief Trader William McKay noted. Métis not only waited for, but came to expect this type of trade in their winter encampments.[78] By the early 1870s, however, the HBC adopted a program of advancing wholesale trade to freetraders they considered loyal and trustworthy who then conducted trade on the plains and in the winter camps, rather than sending out HBC men.[79]

Trade in the Métis winter camps was profitable for the HBC both in terms of furs and provisions. In addition, these forays into the Métis encampments were important during periods when provisions at the Fort were low. In February 1858, the Chief Trader at the Qu'Appelle Lake post spent three days at Wood Mountain, returning with four bags pemmican, one buffalo shoulder, one buffalo boss and some tongues, six robes, ten red fox pelts and eight skunks.[80] A month later accompanied by William Daniel, Métis, guide and interpreter for the post, he repeated the trip again, returning with his team of dog sleds loaded with provisions and furs amounting to "60 robes, 57 wolves, 16 red foxes, 40 kitts, [and a] few badgers."[81] In early 1863, HBC traders visited the wintering village at Moose Mountain, securing nearly 600 pounds of assorted provisions from the freemen.[82] A month earlier, they had procured 597 pounds of pemmican, 56 pounds of dried meat and some provisions from Cuthbert McGillis at Moose Mountain. McGillis' wares had come by way of Joseph Parisien, a Métis employee of the post, who wintered at Moose Mountain and traded on behalf of the Company.[83]

The frequency, longevity and success of these trading relationships demonstrates the significant size and importance of these wintering villages, particularly Moose Mountain and Wood Mountain as sites of commerce and production. Men and women worked hard throughout the winter, feeding their families and suppling hides, furs and provisions to the trade. To facilitate the trade in these locations, the HBC came to rely on

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[78] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.; Cowie, 423.
[79] Cowie, Company of Adventurers, 440 and 458.
[80] Journal of Qu'Appelle Lake Post, 1857-1858, 4 February 1858, Glenbow Archives.
[81] Journal of Qu'Appelle Lake Post, 1857-1858, 4 March 1858, Glenbow Archives.
[82] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 31 March 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[83] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 26 February 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

their most trusted Métis employees as well as on the relationships they could leverage in the winter encampments. This trade was particularly important to the HBC during periods of scarcity during the winter months.

Conclusion

As buffalo was a mainstay of Métis diet it also influenced Métis social, economic and political structures. The way in which the Métis organized their buffalo hunts reflected family and kinship systems, self-governing structures and understandings of the land and its resources. The hunt dictated how families organized themselves so that they could strategically utilize environmental resources. The decline of buffalo changed the way in which Métis families lived. Many continued to make their seasonal trips to the plains and increasingly 'wintered over' living more permanently on the plains.

Métis women were responsible for processing the proceeds of the hunt, contributing the necessary skills, labour and expertise, which made the buffalo hunt and the production and trade of pemmican, dried meat, hides and robes possible. Working as part of a family economic unit, they provided a labour force and complementary skillset that was relied upon and valued, allowing them to make buffalo both consumable and economically profitable. Métis women made a significant contribution to both family subsistence and commercial exchange.

By the 1860s, there was a visible Métis presence in the Qu'Appelle Valley as buffalo hunters, traders and freighters, with their families began to take up small plots of land where they could live close to the water, plant vegetable gardens and easily access the variety of resources the environment had to offer. These families increasingly participated in a mixed economy supplementing their traditional subsistence activity of hunting and gathering with small-scale agricultural production to varying degrees. With this shift, men and women continued to fill complementary and crucial economic roles in relation to food production, ensuring the survival of the family.

Chapter Four: Daughters of the Country

> You've heard about the Métis men and how they lived their lives
> It's time that someone told about their daughters and their wives
> Who made the meals and mended clothes and kept a spotless home
> And tended to their babies while their sons and husbands roamed
> And who did they have to thank for that?
> May I tell you bluntly?
>
> It was those shawl-wearing, rabbit-snaring, moccasin-making,
> bannock- baking, floor-mopping, wood-chopping, snowshoe-mending,
> garden-tending, berry-finding, pemmican-grinding, hide-cleaning,
> hair-preening, child-rearing, persevering…Daughters of The Country![1]

The song lyrics above, written and recorded by Métis musician and songwriter, Don Freed and accompanied by elementary school students from Northern Saskatchewan, capture the multitude of critical roles Métis women filled in their family economy and social and political networks. Women were not only responsible for processing vast amounts of buffalo meat and hides, both for personal consumption and for trade, but they engaged in a range of actions and activities that allowed them to contribute necessary skills, labour and expertise to the success and operation of the HBC posts in which their husbands were formally engaged and to the social, economic and political networks within which they operated.

By the 1850s, the HBC posts in the Swan River District increasingly engaged Métis men in skilled and unskilled labouring positions, and in both formal and informal capacities. Working in both temporary and long-term arrangements and in an ad-hoc fashion provided flexibility, and a measure of independence while ensuring that the Métis had access to resources and employment when necessary. In this arrangement, women often worked alongside their husbands, although in an informal way. Women provided necessary domestic services and general labour working in the HBC's gardens as well as skilled labour in producing post rations, hunting and snaring of small game and the preparation of furs and hides. Métis women contributed significantly to feeding post

[1] Don Freed, *Daughters of the Country*, The Valley of Green and Blue, Gabriel Dumont Institute, compact disc 2007.

employees and their own families. They well understood their economic role in food production, but also the social and political functions that food could facilitate.

The release of Sylvia Van Kirk's groundbreaking study *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870*, shifted how scholars think about the roles of women in the fur trade.[2] Indeed, Indigenous women's contributions to the fur trade are now well documented. Refuting the temptation to cast women as passive victims, Van Kirk demonstrates that women filled complex, overlapping and essential social, economic and political roles in the trade. Gender norms restricted and defined women's roles by their relationships to men but they acted to make the most of the opportunities available to them. Filling roles as wives, mothers and daughters, they also acted as helpmates, guides, interpreters, and diplomats in trade relationships. They supplied their labour, skill and expertise in the dressing of furs and the production of moccasins, snowshoes, fishing nets and canoes. They had a significant role in procuring and preserving country provisions including the production of pemmican, fishing, snaring small game and gathering wild foods. These foods they produced for themselves and their families but also to feed fur company employees and support commercial trade.

The HBC regularly employed First Nations and Métis men in the posts of the Swan River District. Employed for a day, a week, month or longer, employees often moved between posts as the work dictated. Some were formally employed on contracts of varying lengths, while others were employed on a more temporary or ad-hoc basis by the job or the trip. As early as the 1851-52 trading year, men such as Simon Blondin [Blondeau], William Daniel, John and Francois Desmarais, John Fisher, Bonaventure Guardapuis, Louis and Pierre Levellier, Alexis Peltier and others were working as engaged servants at Fort Ellice.[3] These men, along with others such as William Birston, Narcisse Cardinalle, Antoine Desjarlais, Francois Ducharme, Joseph Letendre, Charles Racette and Edward Sayer were listed as employees of the Swan River District into late 1850s and early 1860s.[4] Many were long term employees, who, by the 1860s-70s remained employed as servants with the HBC. Others including Simon Blondeau,

[2] Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties.*
[3] List of Servants 1851-52, Fort Ellice Account Books, B.63/d./5, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
[4] Fort Ellice Account Books, B.63/d/4-11, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.

Francois Desmarais, John Fisher, Narcisse Cardinalle, William Birston, and Antoine Desjarlais, however, left the HBC choosing to live as independent freighters, traders and buffalo hunters.[5] Known as "freemen" or "freetraders" because they were outside the regular employ of the Company, they intermittently provided their general labour to the Forts in exchange for rations, or to work off debts they had incurred. Providing labour in this fashion offered Métis a measure of economic independence and distance from the HBC. Employment with the HBC, whether seasonally or more long-term, also provided Métis with economic options other than participating in the annual buffalo hunts.

Métis provided both general labour and skilled expertise in a variety of positions. Employed as servants, Métis men provided an essential general labour force, carrying out routine tasks such as hauling and chopping wood, working in the Fort gardens and hayfields and taking care of the post's horses. They also built, repaired and maintained the Fort's buildings and fences. Utilizing their skill and ability in hunting and fishing they provided fresh meat to the post and its employees, while using their carpentry and blacksmith skills to build and repair the means necessary to transport goods and provisions. Activities such as hunting and fishing, building canoes, carts and making dog sleighs and snowshoes, utilized the traditional skills and knowledge the Métis had of their environment and the means necessary for moving throughout the plains. In addition to these many activities, many also worked the canoe or york boat brigades, moving goods and provisions back and forth on the region's river systems.[6] By the 1860s however, the means of moving goods shifted from water transport to freighting goods overland along the matrix of cart trails the Métis knew well.

The labour and expertise that Métis brought to the trade, particularly their knowledge of the physical environment and of the cart trails that crisscrossed the western plains made them ideal candidates to freight goods and guide trading parties. Their experience in the region's social and political environments made Métis indispensable as interpreters. In the Swan River District, the HBC looked to trusted, reliable and experienced men such as Antoine Desjarlais, William Daniel, William Birston and Pierre

[5] Fort Ellice Account Books. B.63/d/1-12, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.
[6] Into the 1860s, york boats, each manned by 6 to 8 men, were the preferred means of transportation moving goods from the inland posts to York Factory, the main shipping depot for the HBC located at the mouth of the Hayes River on Hudson Bay.

LaPierre to act as guides and interpreters. Men such as these led hunting and trading expeditions across the North-West, into First Nations camps and the Métis wintering villages where they acted as interpreters providing language translation and helping HBC traders facilitate the trade. Possessing specialized local and regional knowledge, skill and expertise the Métis created a niche for themselves, useful in the employ of the HBC but also as guides, interpreters and hunters for the exploring expeditions of Captain John Palliser, Henry Youle Hind, the Earl of Southesk, William Francis Butler, Milton and Cheadle and others.[7] It was not always skill and experience that afforded individuals their roles. For John and Alexander Fisher, it was the privileged position and influence of their father, Chief Trader Henry Munro Fisher that secured John and Alexander's positions within the HBC. For a time, John worked as an interpreter at Fort Ellice, and Alexander was engaged as horse guard at Fort Qu'Appelle. According to Isaac Cowie, Alexander was skilled with horses and ensured the Fort's horses were well pastured, watered and protected from thieves, but continued to garner influence amongst his peers and employers because of his father's position.[8]

Women of the Fort

Men were engaged with the HBC in numerous positions and their First Nations or Métis wives also contributed their labour, skills and expertise to the running of their households and to the operation of the Forts. Not often provided under a formal contractual arrangement, women worked for the HBC, contributing their general labour and specialized expertise to the operation of the Forts. Women of the Fort provided general and domestic labour. At Fort Pelly in 1863, the HBC paid several women for washing and making soap for the "dwelling house," which was the house where the Chief

[7] For more information on the role of Métis guides in these expeditions, see: Irene M. Spry, *The Palliser Expedition: An Account of John Palliser's British North American Exploring Expedition, 1857-1860* (Toronto: The Macmillian Company of Canada, 1963).; The Earl of Southesk, *Saskatchewan and The Rocky Mountains: A Diary and Narrative of Travel, Sport, and Adventure, During A Journey Through The Hudson's Bay Company's Territories, In 1859-1860* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1969).; William Francis Butler, *The Great Lone Land: An Account of the Red River Expedition and Other Travels and Adventures in Western Canada* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1970).; Walter B. Cheadle, Cheadle's Journal of Trip Across Canada, 1862-1863 (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1971).; and, Youle Hind, *Narrative.*

[8] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 220.; Alexander Fisher, Scrip Claim 3636, Vol. 1327, RG15-D-II-8-b, Reel C-14938, Métis Scrip Records, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

Factor lived and conducted trade.[9] Women were also responsible for keeping the Fort's yard clean, even in winter.[10] In 1876 women at Fort Ellice worked a total of ten days shoveling snow over the course of a month.[11] In some instances, women also worked alongside men to mud and thatch various Fort buildings.[12] They processed hides and robes hunted by their husbands and other employees of the post and they created all types of clothing, moccasins and snowshoes that they sold to the post and its employees. Much of their work was labour intensive. Women worked hard in planting, maintaining and harvesting the Fort's large vegetable gardens, in hunting, fishing and snaring small game and making pemmican and dried meat for their families, as well as for the post's consumption.

From the late 1850s-70s, there were at least two gardens at each Fort Ellice and Fort Qu'Appelle (Figure 4.1). Both had a kitchen garden located within the walls of the Fort as well as cropland outside the Fort's walls for growing potatoes, barley and hay. Fort Qu'Appelle's kitchen garden was approximately 150 feet square and protected by a ten-foot high picket fence. Close by was a log icehouse used to preserve and store fresh fish and meat. Located a short distance from the Fort, was cropland fenced with rails, about 10 acres in size for growing potatoes and barley as well as a hay field.[13] Hay was particularly important for feeding the Fort's horses and oxen.

[9] W. H. Long. *Fort Pelly Journal of Daily Occurrences, 1863*. (Regina: Regina Archaeological Society, 1987), 108-128.
[10] Cowie*, Company of Adventurers*, 213.
[11] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, December 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[12] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, December 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[13] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 210-214.

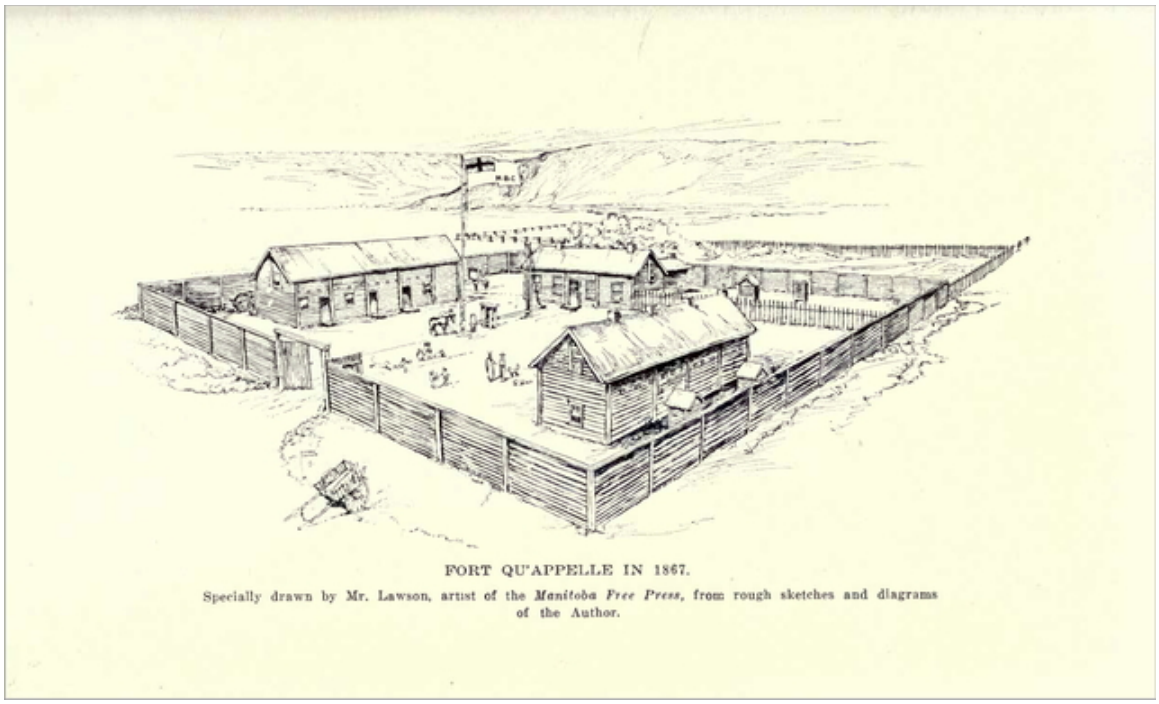

Figure 4.1: Fort Qu'Appelle c. 1867[14]

Work in the gardens and cropped fields was seasonal, beginning in late April or early May and continuing generally until mid-October. Men and women prepared the kitchen garden and cropland for planting, contributing their labour in complementary and gendered ways, as small-scale agriculture required intensive amounts of labour at specific times of the year and often required all available labour, whether male or female, to complete work when required. The seasonality of this work dictated that men and women often work across gendered lines to ensure completion of tasks in a timely manner. The cropped fields, due to their size, required significantly more intensive labour for planting and maintenance as compared to the kitchen garden. This required the labour of both men and women.

In both the kitchen gardens and cropped fields, men repaired and replaced fence pickets, as well as ploughed and cleared the ground for planting. Women and older children worked alongside, cleaning the ground, digging stones and spreading manure. Once ready for planting, both men and women prepared the seed and did the planting.

[14] Fort Qu'Appelle [ca. 1867], R-B 12066, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

The process of preparing the ground, repairing and replacing pickets and planting the garden could take up to a month. Once planted however, the kitchen garden became women's responsibility, while both men and women continued to work the cropped fields.[15]

During the months of June and July, men, women and older children worked at hoeing, watering and weeding the gardens. At Fort Qu'Appelle, Isaac Cowie contended that crop maintenance during the growing seasons fell to women because of the nature of HBC economic activity. Often, men were away trading and freighting during the summer months, their wives and families remaining at the Fort.[16]

During late August and into September and October, plants were ready for harvest, and required a substantial investment of labour in a short period of time. There were potatoes to dig, barley and hay to cut and stack, and it all required hauling back to the Fort. Significantly more women than men engaged in harvesting the Fort's gardens and crops, yet tasks remained gendered, complementary and collaborative. At Fort Ellice in October 1860, the women of the Fort and only six men, worked at harvesting the potatoes from the Fort's garden.[17] In September 1867, 45 women and six men collected the hay from one of Fort Ellice's hay fields.[18] In these tasks, men were responsible for cutting the barley or hay, followed along by women who gathered and stacked it. The ratio of women and men engaged in these activities resulted from differing amounts of labour required to cut hay and barley in comparison to the larger amount of labour required to gather and stack it. Consequently, the Forts significantly relied on women's labour in planting and harvesting their gardens and crops.

Men and women both contributed their labour to planting and harvesting, albeit to different extents, and both had an important role to play in protecting the garden from theft or ruin. Not only susceptible to the elements and to pests such as weeds, grasshoppers, birds and small rodents like mice and squirrels, the gardens were also

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[15] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 213-214.
[16] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 286.
[17] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, October 1860, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[18] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, September 1867, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

vulnerable to theft. The Forts closely guarded and protected their planted spaces with rail or picket fences, built and maintained by men, because not doing so could result in the loss of garden produce and less food to feed the post. Picket fences around the kitchen gardens kept out the post's dogs and rail fences around the larger cropped fields helped deter large game such as deer from entering the fields to feed.[19] Rail fences also protected cropped fields form human theft. The frequency in which theft occurred unknown, but it did occur. Theft was such a concern, that in late August 1860, Joseph Parisien and his family relocated from the Fort to the garden, setting up camp there for the duration of harvest. Sent there by his superiors, Parisien's role was to not only begin the harvest but also to "keep the Indians from stealing."[20] Likely even the presence of Parisien and his family kept thieves at bay, however, that the Fort deemed it necessary to have someone live at the gardens for the duration of its harvest reveals that theft was a significant concern.

Just as women were relied upon for their domestic labour and for working in the gardens, they were depended upon for their expertise in hunting and snaring small game and in processing and preserving wild meat and hides. Their proficiency in food provision was particularly important during periods when rations were low at the posts. In the late 1850s-early 1860s women such as Mary Cook, wife of Chief Trader at Fort Ellice William McKay, provides an example of how women's skills were relied upon in times of need (Figure 4.2).[21] In March 1859, she accompanied her husband and interpreter William Birston on a two-day hunting trip, returning to the Fort with over 50 rabbits.[22] It is unclear if she caught any of these rabbits but she did set out from the Fort

[19] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 214.
[20] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, August 1860, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[21] Mary Cook, born in 1824, was the daughter of Joseph Cook and Catherine Sinclair. She married William McKay, son of John Richards McKay and Harriet Ballenden in 1846. Together they had ten children. William joined the service of the HBC in 1837, stationed at various posts within the Swan River District. From 1858 to 1870, he was in charge at Fort Ellice, becoming Chief Trader in 1865. For more information see: McKay, William "C", Biographical Sheets, Hudson's Bay Company Archives.; and Lawrence Barkwell, "William McKay II. (1818-1882)," Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/11999.
[22] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, March 1859, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

on two separate occasions the same month to set rabbit snares.[23] Demonstrating her independence, not just in her action over these two days, but throughout the course of her husband's tenure at Fort Ellice, Cook regularly left the Fort to hunt and trap or to visit relatives at Red River. Family members, other women and sometimes a male employee of the post would accompany Cook on these excursions. For instance, in February 1869 Felicite Arcand, the wife of engaged servant Baptiste Patenaude accompanied Cook on a weeklong trapping trip.[24]

Figure 4.2: Mary Cook (Mrs. William McKay) family, c.1870[25]
Front row – left to right: unknown, sister of Mary Cook; Mary Cook; unknown sister of Mary Cook. Back row: James McKay, later judge on Saskatchewan Court of Appeal; Gilbert McKay; Angus McKay, Hudson's Bay Company employee; Joseph McKay.

[23] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, March 1859, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[24] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 23 February 1869, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[25] Mary Cook McKay family [c. 1870], NA-1010-5, Glenbow Archives.

Mary Cook's actions are not surprising when contextualized with other women's actions at the Fort. During the spring of 1863, Fort food supplies were low and women like Cook utilized their expertise in snaring rabbits to feed themselves, their families and the Fort. Over four days in March 1863, women snared 45 rabbits, adding to the Fort's food supplies.[26] This contribution, however was not enough to sustain the Fort, as a short time later, George Sanderson, Joseph Cook, Joseph Parisien and a First Nations man named Nay-se-weng, along with their families were "turned out" by the Fort.[27] Told to leave the Fort and fend for themselves, these families travelled to Shoal Lake to fish and hunt small game, thereby reducing the consumptive pressure exerted on available post rations.[28] After five days at Shoal Lake, George Sanderson's son returned to Ellice seeking provisions as the party had not been able to secure enough food to sustain themselves. Hearing that the families had not eaten for three days, the Fort gave them a bag of pemmican as a last resort. In mid-April, Joseph Cook returned to the Fort, leaving Parisien, Sanderson and Nay-sa-weng at Shoal Lake with their families. By month's end, the remaining families still experienced little success at Shoal Lake, so moved to Bird Tail Creek where the HBC told them, they would undoubtedly have more luck fishing. After being away from the Fort for a month, Parisien and Sanderson and their families returned to Ellice. Upon the party's return to Ellice, rations at the post had not improved and so a few days later they relocated, at the HBC's suggestion, to Fort Qu'Appelle where all hoped more rations were available. The situation at Fort Ellice must have been dire, as immediately following Parisien and Sanderson's departure for Fort Qu'Appelle, Mary Cook and her children also left the Fort, striking off by themselves "to try and hunt their living across the river."[29] "Turning out" employees and their families was a common practice intended to keep costs down and protect valuable stores of pemmican from consumption as rations. However, in this instance it is noteworthy that it was Mary Cook, the Chief Trader's wife, who left the Fort to support her family. Such action

[26] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, March 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[27] Joseph Cook referred to here is the brother of Mary Cook McKay.
[28] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, March 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[29] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 11 May 1863, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.

illustrates her own, and her husband's confidence, in her ability to support the family by hunting small game.

Cook well understood the importance of her skill and expertise in feeding her family. However, she also recognized the social and political role she could make to her husband's trade. When travelling to his new post at Fort Qu'Appelle in 1867, newly appointed clerk Isaac Cowie stopped at Fort Ellice and dined with Chief Trader McKay, his wife and fellow clerk, Willie Traill. Feasting on an extravagant meal of wild game, fowl and fish, preserved wild fruit and garden vegetables skillfully prepared by Cook, Cowie proclaimed that the McKays personified hospitality.[30] In preparing such a lavish meal, Cook demonstrated she understood the value of hospitality and generosity in establishing what potentially was to become a long and productive relationship with the new clerk.

Women of the Fort contributed complementary labour and except for some domestic tasks, most work they engaged in was not specifically women's work. Men and women filled complementary yet gendered roles in the Fort's gardens, and women contributed their experience and labour to feeding the posts. Gendered divisions of labour however, were less important than ensuring the completion of essential tasks when labour requirements dictated. Rarely did men or women refuse to do work they considered outside the bounds of their gender. There is one instance however, in July 1868 where Joseph Boyer, a Fort Ellice employee refused to do work that he considered "women's work." When directed to clean up the Fort's yard, Boyer did so begrudgingly only to afterward complain to trader Walter J.S. Traill that he wished to leave the HBC if he forced to do "old women's work."[31] Boyer's insistence that such a division of labour existed within the Fort economy is notable. Married to Felicite Patenaude, Boyer and his wife lived close to Felicite's parents, Felicite Arcand and Baptiste Patenaude who was also engaged at Fort Ellice.[32] Known for her expertise in hunting and trapping small

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[30] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 189.
[31] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 1 July 1860, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
At the time, Traill was second in command to Chief Trader William McKay. Walter J.S. Traill and Willie E. Traill were brothers.
[32] Joseph Boyer, Scrip Claim 42973 Disallowed, Vol. 178, RG15-D-II-3, Reel T-12022, Métis Scrip Records, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

game, Felicite Arcand would have passed on this skillset to her daughter.[33] Thus, Boyer lived within an extended family network of women who approached their work with forethought towards performing tasks as required, rather than those that fit within prescribed roles.[34] Similarly, Boyer operated within a larger kinship system of strong independent women, such as his niece Cecilia, wife of buffalo hunter and trader Norbert Welsh. Due of their varied and significant skillsets, women such as Felicite Patenaude, her mother Felicite Arcand and Mary Cook among many others, were relied upon for their knowledge and labour, thereby contributing to the functioning and maintenance of the trading environment.

In exchange for their labour, HBC employees received lodging, allowances and rations according to what was available at the post, the work they performed and their position in the Company. Employees and their wives and families generally lived in proximity to, or within the confines of the Fort itself and so continued to provide food for themselves and their families, while also receiving rations and allowances from the HBC.

The type and number of rations received depended upon what was available. Rations included pemmican, fresh or dried meat, fish as well as seasonal vegetable produce from the Fort's gardens. At Fort Qu'Appelle in the early 1870s, Isaac Cowie indicated that men's daily allowance of rations included: "twelve pounds of fresh buffalo meat, or six pounds dried meat, or three pounds pemmican, or six rabbits, or six prairie chickens, or three large whitefish, or three large ducks or six small ducks."[35] Women received one half of men's allocation, while children received one quarter. Families also received potatoes, milk for the children, occasionally dried berries, rough barley for those who wanted it and a weekly allowance of tallow or fat.[36] At Fort Pelly, winter rations for the 1870-71 season included pemmican, flour, fresh meat and fish, the amount dependent upon the position of the employee.[37]

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[33] Journal of Daily Occurrences, Fort Ellice, 1856-1876, 23 February 1869, MSS C511/6/1, MG 437 A. S. Morton Collection, University Archives and Special Collections, University of Saskatchewan.
[34] Joseph Boyer, Scrip Claim 42973 Disallowed, Vol. 178, RG15-D-II-3, Reel T-12022, Métis Scrip Records, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[35] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 214-215.
[36] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 214-215.
[37] Fort Pelly Rations, Winter 1870-1871, Fort Pelly Scroll Book, Hudson's Bay Company Collection, Beinecke Collection, Yale University.

The quantity of rations received at Fort Qu'Appelle seems generous. However, those received at Norway House were only slightly less in comparison. Letitia Hargrave, wife of Chief Trader James Hargrave, described the food rations available at Norway House in 1842. Although not to the extent of those received in Qu'Appelle, they too, appear to be quite generous. She described an abundance of fish, and other rations employees received. Each man received "a pound of flour a day, pease, oatmeal, pork, pemmican, salt goose and plover, fresh partridges in winter or 9 months a year besides ½ a pint of rum a week…Besides flour, pease and meal the rations are for a man one goose a day 3 ducks or 4 plovers or 4 partridges."[38] Provided with enough food basics, employees had to purchase their own tea, sugar, butter and fat, which at Norway House was reindeer fat.

Employees also had access to a variety of foods and supplies in exchange for their earned allowances. These included: various articles of clothing, cloth, tobacco, alcohol, gun powder, ammunition and many other products. Employees regularly took at least part of their allowance in food items such as butter, grease, tea, sugar and rum. Likewise, if women received allowances for their labour, they tended to exchange it for items such as tea or sugar.

When distributing rations, European employees, including the commissioned officers, clerk and postmaster received the largest number of rations followed by the post interpreter, servants and labourers. Commissioned Officers, clerks and postmaster, generally of European decent, each received a daily ration of one and quarter pounds pemmican, one and a quarter pots of flour, six pounds fresh meat and three whitefish, while lower ranked positions generally held by Métis and First Nations employees received less.[39] The HBC also provided rations for employee's wives and families.

HBC employees hunted and fished to limit the amount of pemmican expended as rations. According to Willie E. Traill, clerk at Fort Ellice in the 1860s, the HBC regularly made efforts to limit the amount of pemmican consumed locally, to the extent that the Chief Trader's own family hunted and fished to provide for themselves rather than

[38] Margaret Arnett MacLeod, *The Letters of Letitia Hargrave* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1947), 115.
[39] Fort Pelly Rations, Winter 1870-1871, Fort Pelly Scroll Book, Hudson's Bay Company Collection, Beinecke Collection, Yale University.

relying on HBC rations.[40] In May 1860, rations at Fort Ellice were extremely low, prompting several men and their families to set out with fishnets to secure food. These men and women fished for four days so that they could keep the fort in rations. Fish rations, while generally plentiful, were considered a last resort. They were, however, necessary to feed to large number of dogs kept by the post for their winter transportation needs. Instances such as this where both men and women secured food rations for themselves and the HBC, demonstrates the significance of women's labour to feeding HBC employees and the success of the trade. Consequently, Métis employees and their wives often found themselves both securing and producing rations for the HBC and indirectly providing for their own family's food supply.

The HBC was concerned about the amount of pemmican given as rations, and attempted to limit other types of rations. The HBC considered flour a luxury item and rationed it sparingly. Flour was occasionally used as rations at Fort Ellice and Fort Qu'Appelle but only to supply the winter allowances of the officers. As a result, Cowie suggests that women such as the wife of Fort Qu'Appelle's interpreter Jerry McKay, were known to hoard their flour all winter, keeping it for times of sickness and emergency.[41]

Employees received regular rations throughout the year and received additional rations at Christmas and New Year's. Called "regales," the HBC also distributed these in accordance with one's position with the company. In 1863, Christmas regales at Fort Pelly amounted to an additional half-pound of tea and one pound of sugar for each of the engaged servants, with William Daniel, the interpreter receiving two pounds of sugar.[42] At New Year's, each received an additional half a pound of tea, one pound of sugar as well as one yard of tobacco and two pipes.[43] For Christmas at Fort Qu'Appelle, Cowie notes that all were given flour, rice, raisins, sugar, chocolate and extra rations while on New Year's the men were given clay pipes and tobacco followed by a feast of roast

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[40] Douglas K. Munro, *Fur Trade Letters of Willie Traill, 1864-1894* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2006), 41.
[41] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 427-428. John "Jerry" McNab Ballenden McKay, was the son of John Richards McKay and Harriet Ballenden. He served as interpreter at Fort Qu'Appelle throughout the 1860s and into the 1870s. His brother William McKay was Chief Trader at Fort Ellice during this time.
[42] Long, *Fort Pelly*, 114-115.
[43] Long, *Fort Pelly,* 117.

buffalo tongue and boss, cakes, plum-pudding, chocolate and tea for men and their families.[44] Present at the celebration, some of the older women insisted they too receive gifts of tobacco and clay pipes.[45] The expectation of receiving similar gifts reveals that these women understood the value and contribution made with their labour.

Métis Fare and Feasting

Meals were simple in Métis homes. Families relied heavily on buffalo as the mainstay of their diet, supplemented by additional wild foods the plains environment provided. Seasonal vegetable garden produce was also a significant food source, particularly as families began remaining year-round in their wintering villages. By the 1860s, there was a growing settlement along the Qu'Appelle Lakes, around the newly erected Roman Catholic Mission. Here, Métis buffalo hunters and their families took up small plots of land along the lakes and river. The Valley environment was rich with resources that were increasingly relied upon, particularly as the buffalo herds declined. Métis harvested deer, rabbits and other small game, in addition to ducks, geese, prairie chickens and other birds. They also relied heavily on catching and netting many kinds of fish. They supplemented this diet with duck and goose eggs, all kinds of wild berries including saskatoon or serviceberries and chokecherries, as well as hazelnuts, wild onions, turnips and many other wild foods.

The Métis consumed meat fresh, dried or prepared as pemmican. They roasted fish like buffalo and other game meat over a fire, cooked it in a stew or dried for future consumption. They fried meat or pemmican with flour as a dish called rubabou. They also chopped, seasoned and formed the meat into small balls, called les boulettes. Rolled in flour and cooked with potatoes, these made a simple stew or soup, often served on special occasions. Chopped meat was also a filling in tourtière, a pie made with seasoned meat filling and a pastry crust. In drying meat, the Métis prepared it the same way, cut into strips and hung on a rack to dry and smoke with the heat of the sun and a small fire. Fish was similarly prepared. Cowie described Thomas Favel during "his busy season"

[44] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 246.
[45] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 246.

drying fish at the river and putting it up for winter.[46] Favel, a fisherman was "making his fall fishery and preserving the fine whitefish he was catching in the usual way by spitting them with willow wands above the tail in tens, and hanging them up, heads own, on a stage to drain and dry."[47] When dried, meat and fish could be stored for future consumption, or it could be pounded into flakes and prepared as pemmican, mixed with tallow or fat and dried berries.

The Métis harvested all kinds wild fruits and vegetables that they ate fresh, dry, or added to soup, stews and pemmican. Saskatoon berries, strawberries, raspberries, pin cherries and chokecherries were a common element of the Métis diet. In addition, they picked and ate wild vegetables such as wild onions and prairie turnips (*psoralea esculenta*). Métis preserved these foods by spreading them on a large cloth or hide to dry in the sun. Drying chokecherries was labour intensive work for women, children and old people because they crushed the berries before drying to break open the pit and mash the berries into a pulp. They crushed the berries using two stones as a type of mortar and pestle, mashing a few berries at a time. Once turned to pulp, berries were formed into small patties for drying. To prepare the crushed and dried chokecherries, they fried them with a small amount of fat and flour creating a thick paste which they served with meat. Called li grens in Michif*,* the fried berries had a sweet taste and a gritty texture, and like other berries, provided necessary vitamins to the Métis diet.

Food and goods acquired through trade supplemented the Métis diet and provided the necessary food preparation and consumption accouterments. Métis acquired foodstuffs such as flour, sugar and tea from the trade as well as items such as kettles, cooking pots and utensils and even chinaware. Métis purchased these goods directly from the HBC or from one of the many itinerant free traders that lived and travelled intermittently with the Métis hunting brigades.[48] These freetraders provided a store of trade goods easily accessed by families as they moved throughout their seasonal rotation. Welsh indicates that traders like him carried a canteen with "supplies of all the necessities and luxuries of camp life and travel" including "tea, sugar, spices, cheese, jams, jellies,

[46] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 200.
[47] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 200.
[48] Welsh, *The Last Buffalo Hunter*.; Charette, *Vanishing Spaces*.; Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride*.; Callihoo, "Buffalo Hunts,".

marmalades, preserves, bacon and canned meats, gun powder, shot and bullets."[49] Also included in the supplies by traders were "tobacco, Hudson Bay blankets, all kinds of prints and cottons, vermillion (lots of vermillion), axes, butcher knives, files, copper kettles, guns and – the main thing – alcohol, lots and lots of alcohol."[50] Items such as chocolate, coffee, currants, mustard, oatmeal, black pepper, pimento, raisins, rice as well as a number of spices and confections were also available from the various posts in the interior.[51] Most of these were not part of their everyday diet. However, Métis acquired and consumed foods such as chocolate, raisins, currents and coffee on special occasions and holidays such as Christmas.[52]

One of the most important items in Métis households was flour, used in the preparation of bannock or la galette. Bannock is unleavened bread made of flour, water and fat, and then baked over a low fire. It was an important item in the Métis diet, particularly when game was scarce.[53] Most often baked, bannock was also fried like doughnuts. When fried, they called it li beignes or as Norbert Welsh recalled, de croxegnols. To prepare, women made a dough from flour, fine tallow and water. They rolled the dough out, cut it into squares and then made four or five slits on the edges of the dough, before cooking them in boiling fat. Welsh notes, that when cooked, des beignes looked like fingers all twisted into "fancy shapes, all criss-crossed."[54] These were a treat served for special occasions and celebrations, and sometimes tossed in a mixture of cinnamon and sugar.

For the most part, meals were simple and cooked outside, over a fire or with a small wood stove. As families moved into their winter cabins however, cooking also moved inside, done over the clay hearth of the fire place or, if fortunate, over a wood burning stove. Cooking and eating utensils were also generally simple items acquired from the posts, or items such as bowls, plates and spoons fashioned by Métis themselves out of wood or bone. Often, Métis owned at least a few English chinaware bowls, plates,

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[49] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter,* 29.
[50] Weekes, *The Last Buffalo Hunter,* 3.
[51] Long, *Fort Pelly.;* Fort Pelly Scroll Book, Outfit 1868, Hudson's Bay Company Collection, Beinecke Collection, Yale University.
[52] Long, *Fort Pelly,* 112-118.
[53] Erasmus, *Buffalo Days*, 232.
[54] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 110.

cups and saucers purchased in the trade. An English company, W.T. Copeland and Sons, produced a range of patterns of transfer-printed earthenware commonly traded and available to Métis at HBC posts from the 1820s forward.[55] Métis families would not have owned many of these china pieces but most had a few in their possession.[56] Chinaware teacups were particularly popular with the Métis in the 1860s-70s, and generally sold for 25 cents a pair.[57]

For Métis, food and the act of dining maintained and strengthened social, economic and political relationships. When hunting buffalo north of Fort Qu'Appelle, Cowie recalled meeting Peter LaPierre, interpreter at the Touchwood Hills post. LaPierre invited Cowie to dine with him, serving a generous meal prepared by Mrs. Baptiste Bourassa, LaPierre's second in command. This dinner was on LaPierre's part likely a political act to strengthen trade relationships between his large extended Métis family and the Clerk from Fort Qu'Appelle, but also an acknowledgment of their relative positions at their respective posts. In retiring to LaPierre's lodge, Cowie found the floor covered in comfortable layers of buffalo robes, brightly coloured blankets, down pillows and a brightly painted table, ready to be set. Made from a simple board about four feet square, the table had no legs and hinged in the center so it easily folded for storage. The dinner included, "dainty dishes of luscious buffalo meat and fried doughnuts" followed by "tea and the luxury of sugar," all of which he ate heartily.[58]

Similarly, Norbert Welsh described a special meal his wife Cecilia Boyer prepared for him and Chief Starblanket in Lebret in the 1880s. For this meal, Cecilia prepared des boulettes, des beignes or de croxegnols and li poutine dans le sac, all of which the Chief enjoyed. Li poutine dans le sac is a suet pudding made with flour, tallow, raisins and spices boiled in a cloth bag and served with a sauce made from brandy.[59] To Boyer's credit, he acknowledged her skill and the significance of her labour in preparing

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[55] Olga Klimko and John Hodges, *Last Mountain House: A Hudson's Bay Company Outpost in the Qu'Appelle Valley* (Saskatoon: Western Heritage Services, 1993), 43.; Olga Klimko, *The Archaeology and History of Fort Pelly I, 1824-1856* (Regina: Saskatchewan Culture and Recreation, 1983), 83-84.
At Last Mountain House, fourteen different patterns of Spode and W.T. Copeland white earthenware were identified while at Fort Pelly, thirty-seven were identified.
[56] Klimko and Hodges, *Last Mountain House, 43.;* Klimko, *Fort Pelly*, 90.
[57] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 103.
[58] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 300.
[59] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 109.

food to his trading success, confessing that he was able to buy "many a good buffalo robe…at a right price after [his] Indians had had a good feed on [his] wife's de croxegnols! De croxegnols were something very special!"[60] As these examples demonstrate, the contribution of women, such as Mrs. Baptiste Bourassa and Cecilia Boyer made to political, social and economic endeavors was significant.

Cultural convention dictated that Métis shared food amongst extended family and with those who visited their homes. Goulet reveals that "the most important expression of hospitality was sharing the food on your table."[61] Following soon after visitors arrived in the home, a meal of reception often became an excuse for celebration that might last for days.[62] As with sharing the proceeds of the buffalo hunt, sharing food ensured that all members of the extended family were provided for and that kinship relationships remained strong. Sharing food accompanied social occasions, celebrations and dances and visiting during the cold winter months. These celebrations during the winter were also when the Métis celebrated marriages, told stories of the old days and prepared special foods. For these celebrations, the evening would always begin with a big meal, and often followed by a singing contest and dancing late into the night. Very competitive, the Métis competed with one other to see who prepared the best meal, who played fiddle, sang or danced the best, and even competed over who would be the first to wear through their moccasins or develop leg muscle cramps from dancing.[63] In 1868-69 Métis hunters, politicians and leaders among the Métis, Pascal Breland and Solomon Hamelin wintered over north of the Qu'Appelle Valley between the Touchwood Hills and Last Mountain Lake posts, in what Cowie suggests was an effort to hunt buffalo and engage in the chase at least one last time.[64] Throughout the winter, Breland opened his home to extended family and community members in social celebration and to maintain kinship and political relationships. On one occasion, Marie Grant, daughter of Cuthbert Grant and wife of Pascal Breland, prepared a lavish meal for Cowie and members of the winter camp, which he noted, "befitted persons of their importance."[65] She served,

[60] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter,* 110.
[61] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 43.
[62] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 43.
[63] Charette, *Vanishing Spaces,* 43.
[64] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 381.
[65] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 390.

> …a feast of the best buffalo meat, as well as cakes, rice and raisins beautifully cooked by Madame Breland, followed by a flowing bowl of rum punch, Mr. Amlin [sic] and his following came to join in further festivities. Fiddles were tuned up, and Red River jig and Scotch reel were joyously joined in by the young men and maidens who were soon followed by their elders. The mirthful dance was later on, as the ladies retired, followed by joyous song and thrilling story of celebrated adventures on the voyage, in the chase and in the encounters of the Métis with the Sioux.[66]

Hamelin's 'following' included his wife Isabelle Vandal, some of their adult children with their spouses and children as well as members of the extended Hamelin and Vandal family. Hamelin and Breland had kinship relationships between them as Hamelin's son Firmin had married Breland's daughter Clemence in 1869.

Such festivities were common in the Métis wintering camp, particularly around the New Year. Celebrated more than Christmas, the New Year was a time to socialize and reaffirm family bonds, as well as an opportunity to break the monotony of the winter cold. Welsh described the winter festivities at la Prairie Ronde on the South Saskatchewan River in the 1870s:

> At New Year's we had a big time. Each man put up a feast…One day I would put up a big feast and invite my friends to come. We would dance the old time dances and the Red River Jig – the reel of four, reel of eight, double jig, strip the willow, rabbit chase, Tucker circle, drops of brandy, and all the half-breed dances. There was always lots of fiddlers. Nearly every man could play the fiddle…Then we would go to another family. I tell you, we had a regular good time. We had lots to eat and drink. Those that wanted to eat, ate, and those that wanted to drink, drank. This feasting lasted about ten days.[67]

These types of New Year's celebrations could last for days, often until Epiphany or All King's Day, on 6 January.

Food, however, was not always plentiful and Métis often faced periods of want. With the failure of the buffalo hunt in the summer and winter 1870-1871, families increasingly moved toward the Qu'Appelle Lakes on a year-round basis, looking to access the Valley's resources and to the HBC for provisions.[68] Unfortunately however, provisions were also in short supply at the Qu'Appelle post, having shipped out of the

[66] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 391.
[67] Welsh, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 37.
[68] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 412-415.

Fort what meager pemmican supply they had managed to accumulate throughout the winter. Chief Trader William McKay privileged supplying the HBC's northern brigades with pemmican over having a large pemmican supply available at the forts for local consumption.[69] This is not surprising considering McKay and wife Mary Cook, hunted to provide for their family and others at the post to offset the HBC cost of feeding Company men and their families. Having little pemmican prepared because of a shortage of buffalo tallow, the HBC did have a supply of pounded meat not yet processed into pemmican, which they were eager to trade to their hungry customers. Some Métis had little else to trade other than their horses, and so sought credit from the HBC to feed themselves. This credit however, was of course, determined in consideration of the conduct and loyalty individuals previously displayed to the HBC. [70]

In the summer and fall of 1871, Métis freemen came to the Qu'Appelle post, sharing tales of starvation and famine on the plains. Some arrivals to the post lamented going without food "for three days at a stretch," forced to eat gophers, the buffalo sinews women saved for sewing or "any wolf which they had the good luck to poison."[71] When they reached the Qu'Appelle Valley, the only abundant food source and rations available at the post were the suckers that "swarmed the creeks." Little preferred but a last resort for hungry Métis, they served the fish with milk, barley and potatoes.[72] The following year, there was upwards of 400-500 people living around the Roman Catholic Mission at Qu'Appelle who were starving, with nothing to eat but dried fish.[73] It was times of scarcity such as these that the wild foods harvested and preserved by women because increasingly important. Likewise, encouraged an increasing reliance on vegetable gardens planted and tended by women at the forts and in Métis settlements.

Conclusion

As the song lyrics of Don Freed's *Daughters of the Country* has captured, Métis women fulfilled a multitude of critical roles in Métis family economy and social

[69] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 416.
[70] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 412-415.
[71] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 425.
[72] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 425.
[73] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunt*er, 74.

networks. Women provided essential knowledge and expertise, and contributed their labour to the success and operation of the HBC posts in which their husbands were formally engaged. Providing some domestic services, women also contributed necessary traditional skills such as hunting and snaring of small game and the preparation of furs and hides. Importantly, they were also a readily available necessary labour force in working the large vegetable gardens planted and maintained by the Forts. They also contributed a significant amount of labour to harvesting the barley and hay fields, providing crucial feed for livestock that were an important part of the post. In providing their labour in the production of these post rations, women also contributed significantly to feeding post employees and to feeding their own families. Women's labour was relied upon in times of need, particularly when rations at the Forts were low.

Men and women worked together in complementary and collaborative ways. That they both worked Fort Qu'Appelle and Ellice's gardens and in harvesting cropland, suggests that there was little division of labour between men and women, more so that the seasonal nature of gardening required intensive amounts of labour for specific periods of time. There were gendered tasks, roles and responsibilities but tasks, such as planting and harvesting, required many hands and so were often the work of both men or women. Men and women worked in the gardens and fields together, contributing their labour and complimentary skills and expertise, much like during the buffalo hunt.

Métis women well understood their economic role in food production, but also the social and political functions that food could facilitate. They were responsible for gathering, preparing and preserving wild foods that fed their families, also bringing variety to their diet. Food was also a large part of all Métis social gatherings and celebrations. On these occasions, Métis spared no expense and women worked hard to treat all guests hospitably and serve the finest food available. Women were creative and flexible in preparing appetizing and flavourful dishes from simple, and often very few, ingredients as they understood the impact that serving a fine meal could have on kinship or trade relationships. For Métis, generosity and hospitality in feeding guests was a way to strengthen and maintain social, economic and political relationships.

Métis women engaged in a range of actions and activities that allowed them to use their traditional skills and expertise related to land use and food production that they had

learned from their own mothers and grandmothers. They passed on skills and knowledge about food production and preservation crucial to their survival. Women such as Marie Delorme, Cecilia Boyer, Mary Cook and others were flexible and demonstrated decision-making in the ways in which they conducted themselves and in their contribution to their family's food production.

Chapter Five: The Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle

> Your Excellency,
> The half-breeds of the Lakes Qu'Appelle and environs offer you today their homage, and submit to you the following petitions, which they present in their name and in the name of all their brethren scattered over the prairies, and beseech you to give them a favorable hearing, and to remember them in the various arrangements that the Government may make with the Indians.
>
> They ask you, — That the government allow to the half-breeds the right of keeping the lands which they have taken or which they may take along the River Qu'Appelle. The right of fishing in all the lakes of the above mentioned river. The right of hunting freely in the prairies west and south-west of the Lakes Qu'Appelle, without being arbitrarily hindered by the Indians, but only in virtue of the regulations that the Indians in concert with the half-breeds and the Government shall establish hereafter for the good of all. The right of trading at the Lakes and environs of the Lakes Qu'Appelle…
>
> Signed the Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle Valley
> Lake Qu'Appelle, 11th September 1874.[1]

The Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle, as they referred to themselves in this 1874 petition to the Dominion Government, recognized the necessity of safeguarding their economic livelihood, land tenure practices and way of life in the face of competition over environmental resources, oncoming treaty negotiation, and encroaching settlement. Buffalo hunters, traders and freighters, these families used, occupied and moved throughout the region and by the 1870s many were living year-round in their winter encampments along the Qu'Appelle Lakes. The shift from wintering in the Qu'Appelle Valley to living there year-round was the result of several complex political, economic and social factors. The most significant factor was access to the diminishing buffalo herds. Although the political climate in the Red River region leading up to and following

[1] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

the 1869-70 Red River Resistance and the subsequent creation of the province of Manitoba also influenced their decision to make the Valley a year-round home.[2]

In the Qu'Appelle Valley, Métis found mutual aid from their kinship relations already in the region, but also protection, fuel and access to the Valley's environmental resources. These families intimately understood the territory and the resources it provided, relying on the buffalo hunt and supplementing their diet with additional foods from the environment, from their small gardens and the trade. For these families, the shift toward year-round occupation of plots of land along the Qu'Appelle Lakes was a relocation within familiar territory made to maintain a Métis worldview that privileged kinship relationships and a mixed subsistence lifestyle premised on hunting, fishing, gathering and small-scale agricultural production. The Métis recognized the necessity of economic adjustment, and sought the means to be successful in making this adjustment, while also protecting a way of life that privileged Métis worldview.

Shift from Wintering Over to Year-Round Settlement

Year-round settlement in the Qu'Appelle Valley gave Métis families steady access to the Valley's resources and placed them in better reach of the diminishing buffalo herds. From the Valley, many continued to make frequent and seasonal hunting trips further west on to the plains, continuing to winter over in places such as the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain, Moose Jaw Bone Creek and the Souris River before returning to their homes and plots of land along the Qu'Appelle Lakes. Locating themselves along the Qu'Appelle Lakes provided access to a steady supply of resources in the immediate Valley region, as well as opportunity to continue to access the resources of their larger traditional hunting territory.

Being in proximity to the Hudson's Bay Company posts at Fort Qu'Appelle and Fort Ellice also ensured that families were also able to maintain their relationships with the Company. Many continued to act as freemen, outside the formal employ of the HBC but cognizant of the necessity of maintaining a trade relationship. Rather than returning to

[2] For a detailed examination of the movement of Métis out of the Red River region see: D.N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820-1900* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications, 1983).; and, Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland.*

Red River to trade at Fort Garry, Métis relied upon the posts in the Valley region for a steady supply of trade goods. The posts also provided independent traders, such as Norbert Welsh, Antoine Larocque, St. Pierre Poitras and Augustin Brabant, continued access to goods necessary to support their trading business with First Nations and Métis further afield from the posts.[3] For Métis families in general, Forts Qu'Appelle and Ellice provided temporary labouring or freighting work and an emergency source of food or supplies during times of scarcity or need. Isaac Cowie recalled the Métis receiving emergency food rations from Fort Qu'Appelle in 1871 when the buffalo hunt failed.[4] That spring, the herds were located far from the Valley. Hunters followed the herds far from their homes and were away for much of the summer. Absent from the Valley and unable harvest the game, fish and plant resources necessary to support their families, they had few options but to seek support from the HBC post when the hunt failed.

Like the HBC posts, the St. Florent Mission, established in 1866, was a natural stopping place for buffalo brigades moving throughout the prairies and was a significant factor in drawing families to the Valley. Métis across the prairies looked to the St. Florent Mission for solemnizing marriages, performing baptisms and burials. Devoutly Catholic, the Métis strived to ensure that their loved ones received a Catholic burial in the cemetery next to the Mission. Norbert Welsh noted that he alone brought at least 60 bodies to the Mission for burial.[5] These were individuals who had died in wintering spots and communities far removed from St. Florent and even further from Red River. Consequently, the Qu'Appelle Lakes region with the HBC post at Fort Qu'Appelle and the St. Florent Mission became a hub of social and economic activity, superseding Red River in importance for Métis who settled nearby, but also for those wintering and living year-round at Willow Bunch, the Cypress Hills and Wood Mountain.[6]

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[3] Cowie, *Company of Adventurer*, 230.; Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 60.
[4] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers,* 415.
[5] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 96.
[6] The St. Florent Mission was often referred to as the Qu'Appelle Mission. In 1885 the settlement was renamed Lebret after father Louis Lebret who had become the parish priest in 1884.

Families Living in the Valley Region by the 1870s

By the early 1870s, HBC Clerk Isaac Cowie estimated that there were as many as 25 families already settled on the Qu'Appelle Lakes as well as approximately 1000 more who moved through the region.[7] Many of these families had come from the parish of Saint Francois Xavier in the Red River region, while others like the Desjarlais' came to the Valley from the Lesser Slave Lake or Athabasca region.[8] It was not a single extended family hunting brigade that settled here seasonally and then permanently. Rather it was an intricate web of interrelated and extended families who already hunted, worked and travelled together for decades by the time they took up year-round occupancy in the Valley. The families of Antoine Larocque and Francoise Laliberte, Baptiste Davis and Julie Bonneau, Pierre Pelletier and Angelique Comtois, Francois Fayant and Madeleine Lemire, Francois Falcon and Euphrosine Poitras, and Antoine Desjarlais and his second wife Susanne Allary, had hunted buffalo together under the leadership of Jean Baptiste Wilkie as early as 1850.[9] As a result, by the 1870s many of these families had strong kinship connections between them. By the time they and their children settled in the Valley they were already exhibiting a strong sense of family and kinship responsibility. Establishing themselves in the Valley region allowed the continuation of Métis social and family governance structures as families continued to live along extended kinship lines, close to one another for mutual aid and support.

Familial connections became more complex with each successive generation. Some, such as the families of "Old Antoine" Desjarlais and Henry Munro Fisher, were closely related by the time they came to the Valley region (Figure 5.1). Desjarlais' daughter Susanne had married Fisher's son Alexander Fisher in 1840. Desjarlais had also been a long-term employee of the HBC and at Fort Ellice under the command of Fisher in the '60s. By the mid-1860s, Desjarlais' large extended family was resident in the region. Antoine was married at least twice: first, to Pelagie Martin and second, to Susanne

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[7] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 482.
[8] For an detailed examination of the Desjarlais family see: Heather Devine, *The People Who Own Themselves: Aboriginal Ethnogenesis in a Canadian Family, 1660-1900* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2004).
[9] Federal U.S. Census, Pembina County, Minnesota Territory, 1850. http://www.usgwarchives.net. Antoine Larocque Sr. and Francoise Laliberte were the parents of Antoine Larocque. Susanne Allary is sometimes referred to as Catherine Allary.

Allary. This union was also a second marriage for Susanne as she had first been married to Francois Martin. The familial relationship is unknown between Pelagie and Francois Martin but they were likely closely related. That Antoine and Susanne married within their extended kinship network after the death of a spouse solidified kinship relationships across family lines. Antoine and Pelagie's daughter, Susanne resided in the Valley with her husband Alexander Fisher, and Susanne and Francois Martin's daughter Julie and her husband Joseph Lemire were also nearby, having taken treaty and then living north of the Valley on Muskowequan reserve.[10] Alexander Fisher's brother John and his wife Betsy Brabant were also resident there.[11] Alongside these families were at least four of Antoine and Susanne's children, Francoise, Louise, Baptiste and Michel.[12] Francoise Desjarlais married Simon Blondeau in 1850 and by 1865 they were living in the region with their eleven children.[13] Louise was married to Eusebe Ledoux. Antoine and Susanne's son Baptiste was married to Julie Grant, daughter of Cuthbert Grant and Marie McGillis, and Michel was married to Julie Bonneau, daughter of Francois Bonneau and Marie Favel. By 1870, Baptiste and Julie had at least five young children, and Michel and his wife Julie Bonneau had at least six. Enlarging the extended family grouping, Julie Grant also had a brother James living in the region with his wife Josephte Helene Gariepy and their children.[14] Likewise, Eusebe Ledoux and his first wife Susanne Bonneau's daughter, Marie had married Antoine Fayant, son of Antoine Fayant and Josephte Pelletier.[15]

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[10] Julie Lemire, Scrip Claim 1235, Vol 1357**,** RG15-D-II-8-c**,** North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[11] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*.; Alexander Fisher, Application for Patent, 3 October 1883, File 290.8, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Elizabeth Fisher, Application for Patent, 22 September 1883, File 290.26, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[12] Simon Blondeau, Application for Patent, 24 March 1884, File 290.22, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Baptiste Desjarlais, Application for Patent, 16 July 1883, File 290.4, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Michel Desjarlais, Application for Patent, 4 June 1884, File 290.32, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[13] Simon Blondeau, Scrip Claim 2 and 148, Vol. 1325. RG15-D-II-8-b, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada; Francoise Desjarlais, Scrip Claim 33, Vol. 1327, RG15- D-II-8-b, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[14] James Grant, Application for Patent, 4 January 1886, File 326.33, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[15] Catherine Ledoux, Scrip Claim 1512, Vol. 1329, RG15-D-II-8-b**,** North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada**.;** Helene Ledoux, Scrip Claim 1513, Vol. 1329. RG15-D-II-8-b**,** North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada**.**

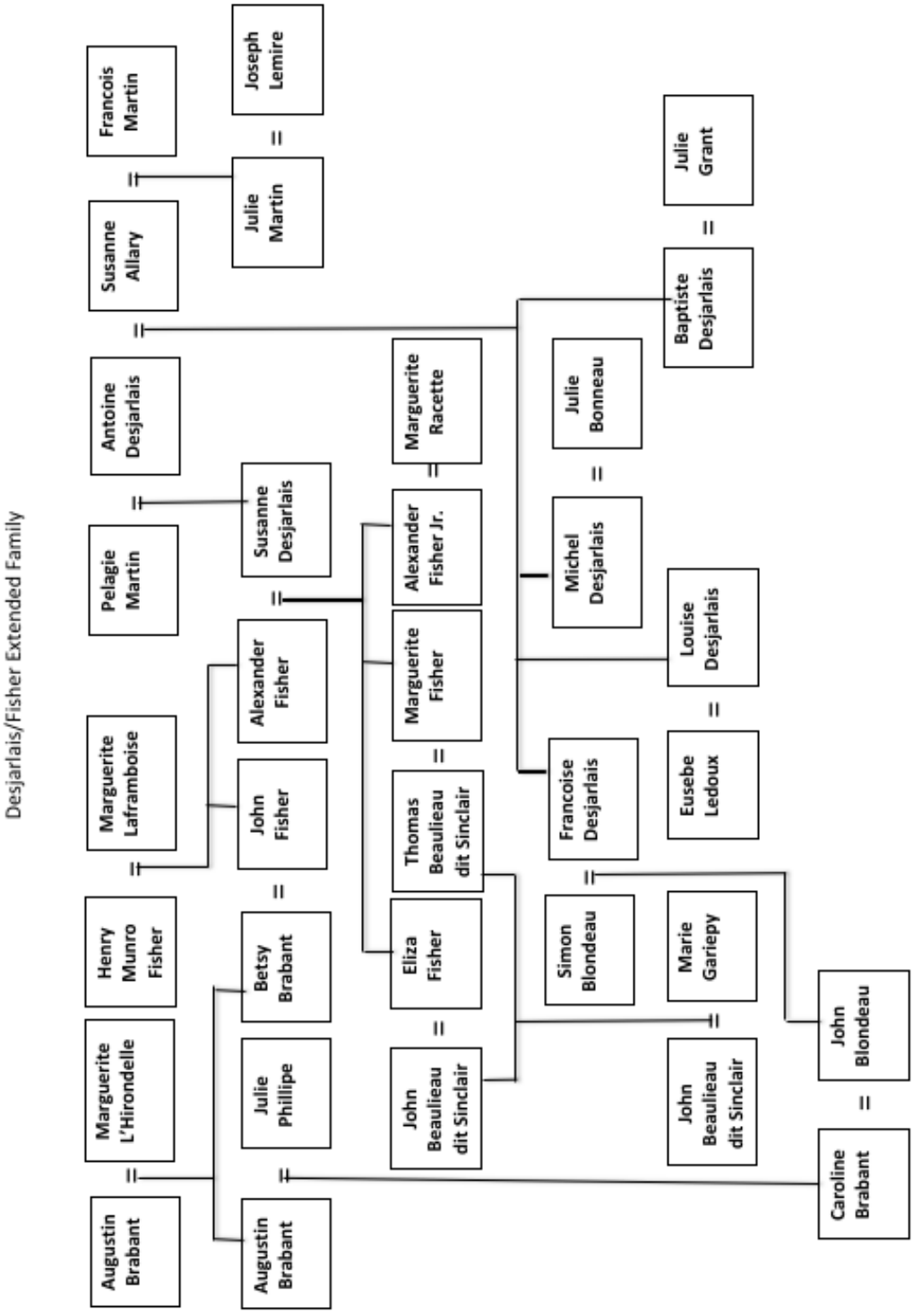

Figure 5.1: Desjarlais and Fisher Family Genealogy

Together the Desjarlais and by extension the Fisher and Blondeau family networks also included the children of John Beaulieau, Augustin Brabant, George Racette and others. Two of Alexander Fisher and Suzanne Desjarlais' daughters, Eliza and Marguerite had married brothers John and Thomas Beaulieau; while their son Alexander Jr. was married to Marguerite Racette, daughter of George Racette and Isabel Vandal. John Blondeau, son of Simon Blondeau and Francoise Desjarlais, was married to Caroline Brabant, daughter of Augustin Brabant and Julie Phillipe. Brabant's sister Betsy was married to John Fisher, brother of Alexander Sr. Not the only extended family in the region, the organizational structure of the Desjarlais kinship network was typical of Métis families and settlements of the period.[16]

Some of the families resident by the 1870s included, but were not limited to: Louis Gariepy and Marie Cardinal; Pierre Desnomme and Madeleine Deschamps dit Amyotte; and Louis Pelletier dit Racette and Josephte Desnomme; Francois St. Denis and Therese Martin; her sister Marguerite and husband Joseph Parisien who had relocated from Fort Ellice; Pierre Bonneau and LaLouise Gariepy; Madeleine Beauchemin and Michel Klyne; Antoine Larocque and wife Rosalie Laplante; George "Shaman" Racette and wife Marie Larocque.[17] Others such as Norbert Welsh, Augustin Brabant and St. Pierre Poitras also resided there temporarily, hunting buffalo and acting as independent traders and freighters.[18]

Population Estimates 1870s and 1880s

Although Cowie estimated that there were approximately 25 families residing in the Valley by the early 1870s, the numbers were quickly increasing.[19] In September 1874,

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[16] See: Payment, *Free People.;* Payment, "Batoche After 1885."; Devine. *Own Themselves.;* Macdougall, *One of the Family.;* Macdougall, "Wahkootowin."; Troupe, *Métis Women*.; Foster, *Métis Identity.;* Thorne, *Many Hands.*

[17] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*.; Madeleine Klyne, Application for Patent, 20 July 1885, File 290.68, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Antoine Larocque, Application for Patent, 8 Aug 1883, File 290.5, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Francois St. Denis, Application for Patent, 13 July 1883, File 290.1, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Pierre Bonneau, Application for Patent, 22 September 1883, File 290.3, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Antoine Fayant, Application for Patent, 19 July 1883, File 290.9, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[18] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers.*; Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*.; St. Pierre Poitras, Application for Patent, 8 August 1883, File 290.6, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[19] Cowie*, Company of Adventurers,* 482.

31 heads of families submitted a petition to Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, Alexander Morris referring to themselves as "the Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle" and seeking protection of their rights to hunt, fish and trade in the region, and for protection of the plots of land they occupied.[20] This was one of numerous petitions put forward in the 1870s-80s. In 1881, they submitted a similar petition, not to the Lieutenant Governor but to the Governor General, the Marquis of Lorne upon his visit to the region.[21] Signed by 113 individuals, this request demonstrated a significant increase in population. Fifty-nine of these signatories were heads of families with their sons making up the remainder. In the same year, the federal census enumerated at least

[20] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885. Petition signatories included: Augustin Brabant, Baptiste Davis, Michel Desjarlais, Michael Klyne, Peter Lapierre, Antoine Larocque, Francis St. Dennis, Norbert Delorme, Thomas Kavanaugh, Pierre Peltier, Michael Demarias, Simon Blondeau, Pierre Poitras, Jean Monet, Joseph Peltier, Corbert Seigneur, John Fisher, Alex Fisher, Alex Swain, Francoise Seignoir, Pierre Flammand, Patrice Monet, Moise Ouellette, Joseph McKay, Joseph Poitras, Antoine Ouellette, Antoine Flavin, Antoine Hamelin, Louison Flammand, Pierre Desnonme, and Andre Flammand.

[21] Pierre LaPierre, Simon Blondin, John Fisher, Alexander Fisher, John Simpson, Xavier Desnomme and others, the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle Settlement to the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada, Petition, 2 September, 1881, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885. Signatories of the 2 September 1881 petition included: Peter LaPierre, two of his sons, Thomas and Theophile and son-in law, Toussaint [Thomas] Gallarneau; Simon Blondin [Blondeau] and eight of his sons, Zachary, John, Louison, Simon Jr., Napoleon, St. Pierre, Ambroise and Joseph; John Fisher, his three sons, George, Pierre and William as well as two son-in-laws, Gregoire Ledoux and Lazarus Laliberté; Alexander Fisher and son Alfred; John Simpson, Jr.; Xavier Denommil [Desnomme]; Joseph Blion[Blayone]; Elie Blion [Blayone], Pierre Bonnotte [Bonneau] Sr., and sons Pierre Jr., Julien and Charles, Hilaire Boucher, Augustin Brabant, Sr.. and sons Augustin Jr. and Edward; William Daniel and sons Joseph and William Jr.; Modeste Daniel; Jean Baptiste Dauphinais; Joseph Delorme; Baptiste Desjarlais and sons Pierre and Isadore; Charles Desjarlais; Mathias Desjarlais; Michel Desjarlais and sons Edbert[Exupert], Michel and Stanislas; Thomas Desjarlais; Francois Desmarais; Daniel Dumas; Antoine Fayant Sr. and sons William, Antoine Jr. and Jean Louis; George Fisher Sr.; Louison Flammand, sons André and Maxim and son-in-law Samuel Turcotte; James Grant and son Joseph James; Napoleon Hamelin; Alexis Henéré; Archil [Michel] Klyne and his brothers Andrew and Theofile, as well as brothers-in-law Thomas Kavanaugh (on behalf of his wife Elise Klyne) and Thomas Kelly (on behalf of his wife Veronique Klyne); Baptiste Laliberte; Joseph LaPierre; Isadore La Plante; Antoine Larocque Sr. and sons Antoine Jr., Alex and William; Joseph Marion and son R.T. [Roderick]; Alexis McKay; Baptiste, Camile, Francois and Xavier Morin; Joseph Parisien and son-in-law Clément Pelletier; Joseph Pellerton Bouvette [Pelletier]; Alex Pelletier; Napoleon Pelletier; Xavier Plante; Iseaid Poitras; brothers Joseph and St. Pierre Poitras, as well as St. Pierre's son Pierre; Charles Racette Sr., son Joseph Sr. and grandson Joseph; Baptiste Robillard, Roderick Ross, sons Roderick Jr., Urbain and Pierre and son-in-law Pierre Pelletier; Matthias Sansregret; John Sinclair Sr. and two sons, Thomas and John; Francois St. Dennis Sr.; Francois St. Dennis Sr. and son Francois Jr.; Cuthbert St. Dennis; Edouard St. Germain; Moise Vallée; Norbert Welsh; as well as Father Huggonnard and Louis Boucher.

87 Métis households in the region, comprised of roughly 500 individuals.[22] By the late 1870s, and indeed by the time of survey in 1881, there was already a considerable, and increasing, year-round Métis presence in the region (Figure 5.2).

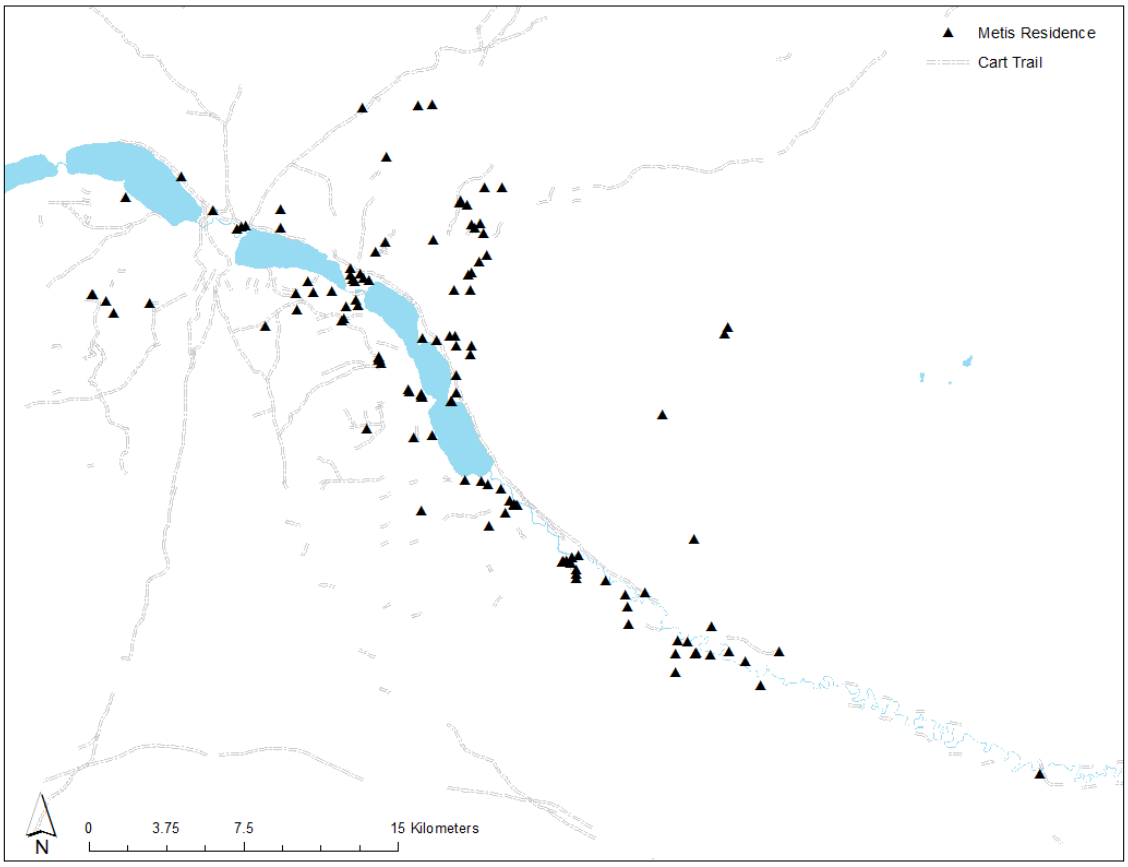

Figure 5.2: Métis Occupancy in Qu'Appelle Valley Prior to Survey (1881-1882)

Female Kinship in the Spatial Organization of Métis Families

Organized around a handful of large extended families with a close female kinship tie, the Qu'Appelle Valley Métis settlement was like other Métis settlements of the period. Female kinship was a significant organizing feature of Métis communities into the late nineteenth century along the South Saskatchewan River in settlements such as Batoche, St. Laurent and La Prairie Ronde, as well as in Montana Métis settlements in the Spring Creek and Lewistown areas.[23] For example, Madeleine Beauchemin Klyne

[22] Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[23] Brown, "Women as Centre,"; Foster, *Métis Identity.;* Macdougall, "Wahkootowin,"; Payment, *Free People* Payment, "Batoche After 1885,".; Troupe, "Métis Women,".

was the matriarch of the extended Klyne family that also included the Desjarlais, Desnomme, Bellegarde, Davis, Poitras, Landry, Gosselin, and Vallee families (Figure 5.3). Madeleine and her husband, Michel Klyne, had come from Devil's Lake in the United States to the Qu'Appelle Valley in the fall of 1871. Michel died there in 1875, leaving Klyne a widow. By 1881, she lived with her teenage son, Napoleon.[24] Six more of her children lived close by, while sons Guillame and Benjamin resided at Wood Mountain and at Milk River, Dakota Territory. Her eldest son, Andre, and wife, Eliza Desjarlais, lived close by with their five children, as did son Theophile and wife Eliza Landry and their four children.[25] Her son Michel and his second wife, Marie Vallee also lived close by. In their household were Michel's six children with his first wife, Helene Davis, Marie Vallee's three children with her first husband, Joseph Gosselin, and two of Michel and Marie's young children.[26] In addition, three of Klyne's daughters, Elise, Veronique and Madeleine were living within this cluster of families. Elise married retired U.S. Civil War veteran and farmer Thomas Kavanaugh in 1867 at Devil's Lake, while Veronique was married to Thomas Kelly, also an American.[27] Madeleine was married to Thomas Desjarlais, son of Jean Baptiste Desjarlais and Marie Martin, who also resided in the region.[28] Klyne's daughter Marie married Joseph Bellegarde and lived nearby on the File Hills reserve.[29] Marie Klyne gained treaty status under the Indian Act when she

[24] Madeleine Klyne family, Household 38, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[25] Andre Klyne family, Household 73, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Theophile Klyne family, Household 39, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[26] Michel Klyne family, Household 78, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[27] Thomas Kavanaugh family, Household 36, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Thomas Kelley family, Household 37, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[28] Thomas Desjarlais family, Household 35, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Jean Baptiste Desjarlais family, Household 33, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[29] File Hills was located north of the Valley. The File Hills reserves included Little Black Bear, Star Blanket, Okanese and Peepeekesis.

married Bellegarde.[30] Marie and Joseph's daughter Eliza resided off reserve, in the Qu'Appelle settlement with Marie's sister Elise and her husband, Thomas Kavanaugh. Mother and grandmother, Madeleine Klyne was central to the large Klyne family network (Figure 5.4 and 5.5).

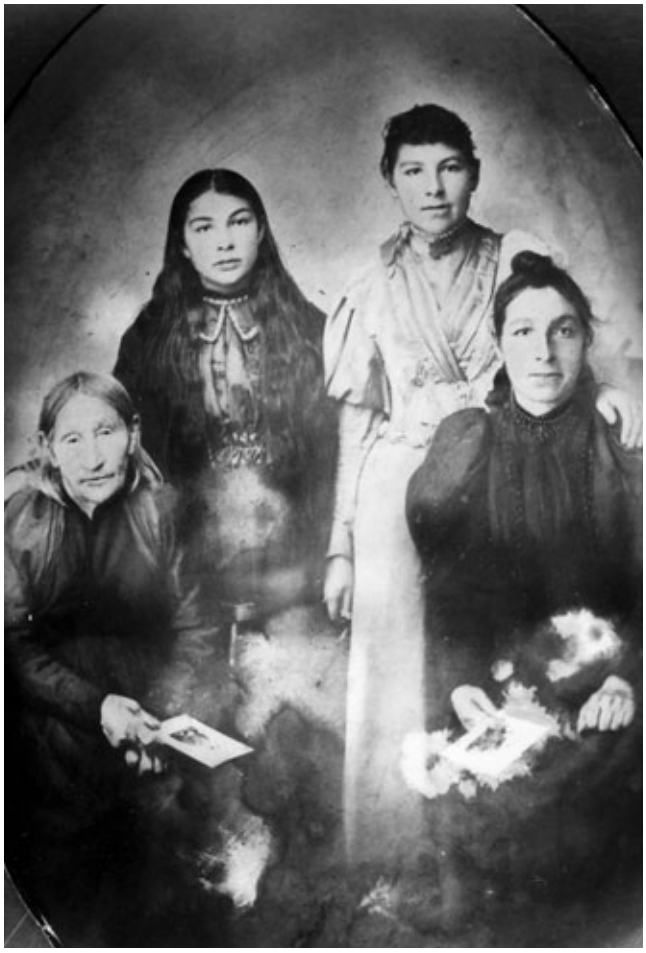

Figure 5.3: Madeleine Klyne family, c.1890s[31]
Front: Madeleine Beauchemin Klyne and daughter Madeleine Klyne Desjarlais. Back: granddaughters Marie Rosine and Justine Desjarlais.

[30] Madeleine Beauchemin, Scrip Claim 65, Vol. 1325, RG15-D-II-8-b, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada. Under the Indian Act, women, like Marie Klyne, who married treaty Indians gained status.
[31] Madeleine Klyne family [c.1890s], R-A8823, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

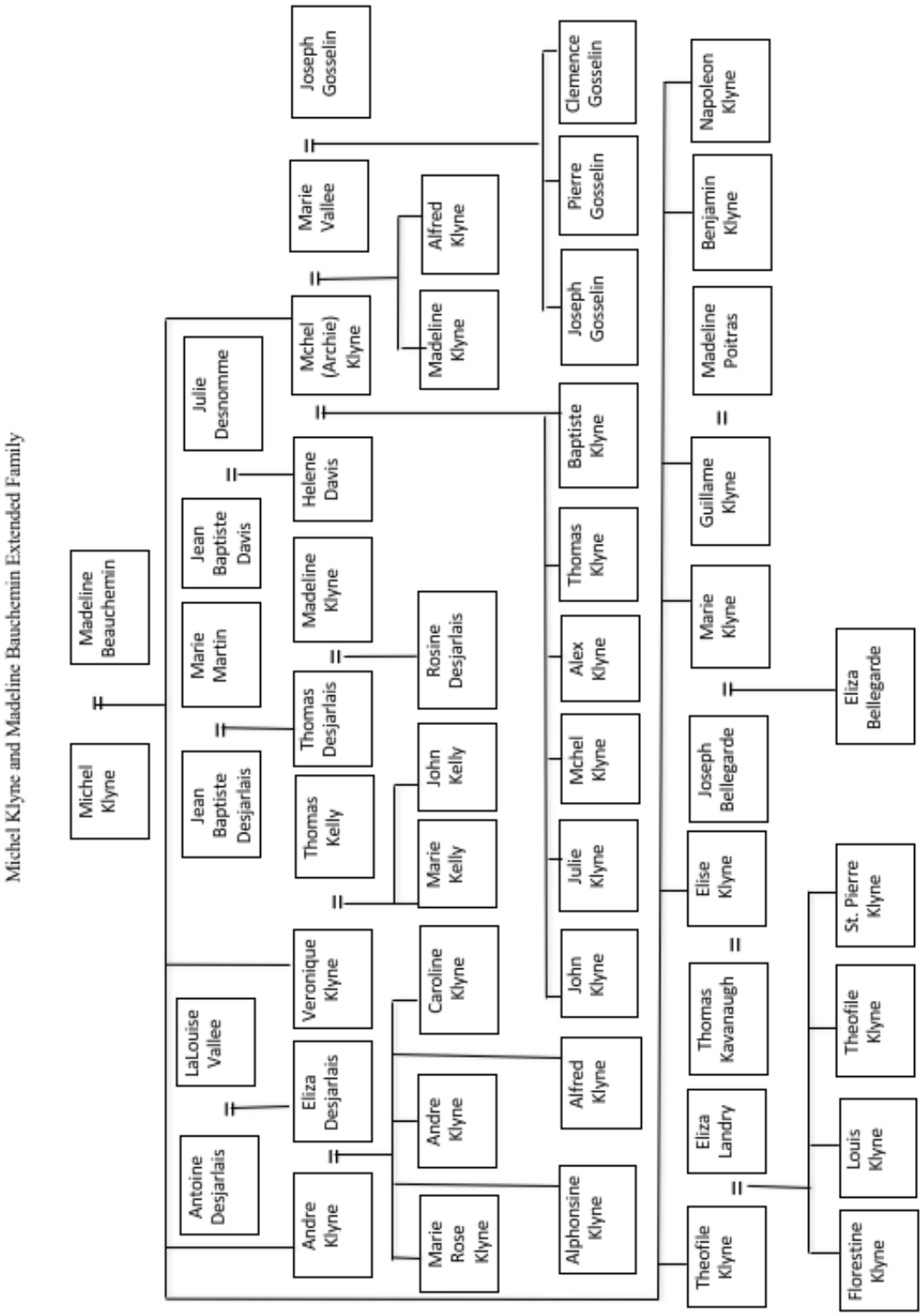

Figure 5.4: Michel Klyne and Madeleine Beauchemin Genealogy[32]

[32] This genealogy does not include all of Michel Klyne and Madeleine Beauchemin's grandchildren.

Figure 5.5: Klyne Family Residences

Just as Klyne was central to the organization of her extended family, so too was Francoise Desjarlais (Figure 5.6). By 1881, Simon Blondeau and his wife Francoise Desjarlais, aged 65 and 60, had unmarried adult children Napoleon and Caroline living with them, as well as their daughter Melanie, son Joseph and twins, St. Pierre and Ambroise.[33] Close by, but in their own homes, were Simon and Francoise's adult children: Simon Jr., John, Zacharie, and, Louison.[34] Simon Jr. and John were both widowed, raising their young children. In 1873, Simon and Francoise's son John married Caroline Brabant, daughter of Augustin Brabant Jr. and Julie Phillipe and their son Simon Jr. married Julie Hamelin, daughter of Gaspard Hamelin and Louise Landry. Both Caroline and Julie died in 1880. Simon and Francoise's son Zacharie, his wife, Florence Desmarais and their young daughter, as well as Zacharie's brother Louison and wife Marie Antoinette Robillard were living close by. Marie Antoinette's parents, Jean Baptiste Robillard and Isabelle Comtois, were resident in the region.[35] Their son Chrysotome later married Simon and Francoise's daughter Caroline in 1885, thus strengthening the kinship relationship between the Robillard and Desjarlais families.

The presence of siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins complicates the spatial organization of the extended family. Living within the Blondeau and Desjarlais extended family network were several of Desjarlais' siblings, including Baptiste, Michel, Isabelle and Julia. Francoise' brother Baptiste, his wife Julie Grant and their 7 children lived next to Simon and Francoise.[36] Julie Grant's brother James and his wife Josephte Helene Gariepy also lived close by.[37] Michel Desjarlais, his wife Julie Bonneau and their four

[33] Simon Blondeau family, Household 23, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[34] Simon Blondeau Jr. family, Household 24, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; John Blondeau family, Household 25, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Zacharie Blondeau family, Household 26, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Louison Blondeau family, Household 27, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[35] Jean Baptiste Robillard family, Household 19, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[36] Baptiste Desjarlais family, Household 28, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[37] James Grant family, Household 74, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

children were present.[38] Three of their four children, Isabelle, Marie and Exupere, were over the age of 18, unmarried and living with their elderly parents. By 1886, Desjarlais' unmarried sisters Isabelle Desjarlais and Julia Martin also lived here.[39] Blind and living alone, Julia Martin resided close to John Blondeau. That Francoise Desjarlais had her elderly siblings living within the cluster of Blondeau residences suggests the complexity of intergenerational kinship relationships, the role of female kinship and the obligations that existed across extended family lines.

[38] Michel Desjarlais family, Household 80, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[39] W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886. Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh. File No. 118650. RG 15, D-II-1, Vol 447. Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, Half-Breed Files, 1871-1946. Library and Archives Canada.

Figure 5.6: Blondeau and Desjarlais Family Residences

Taking up Agriculture: Métis Land Holding Patterns

When settling into the Valley, families looked to maintain a subsistence practice that would allow them to continue to hunt buffalo and other wild game, while supplementing their diet with fish, harvested wild plants and vegetable produce grown in their gardens. Métis gardeners favoured potatoes, onions and other root vegetables because they stored easily for future use. Families continued to hunt buffalo into the Cypress Hills, Wood Mountain and Souris River regions into the very early 1880s. As they took up plots of land, they began to plant and tend large vegetable gardens, a practice carried over from Red River and their experiences with the Hudson's Bay Company.[40] Gerhard Ens argues that Métis were practicing small-scale agriculture in the Red River regions by the mid-1820s. The Métis economic base, he argues, was comprised of the buffalo hunt, small-scale agriculture and seasonal labour for the Hudson's Bay Company in a specialized peasant society and economy, whose primary aim was to meet the needs of the family rather than to secure large profits.[41] Métis reliance on agriculture as supplementary to the hunt continued into the 1840s-50s. [42] Historian W. Leland Clark argues that Métis were indeed, part-time hunters and farmers. They planted before embarking on the summer hunt and harvested upon their return. This schedule meant that Métis gardens often went untended. As a result, Red River settlers, such as Alexander Ross viewed the Métis as not serious farmers. According to Ross, they were

> not, properly speaking, farmers, hunters or fishermen; but rather confound the three occupations together, and follow them in turn, as whim or circumstances may dictate. They farm to-day, hunt to-morrow, and fish the next, without anything like system; always at a nonplus, but never disconcerted…Their own farms, if farms they may be called, point them out as a century behind their European neighbours. Harvest time shows no improvement on sowing time, for they are to be seen anywhere but in the neighbourhood of their proper work. In

[40] See: Gerhard J. Ens, "Métis Agriculture in Red River During the Transition from Peasant Society to Industrial Capitalism: The Example of St. Francois Xavier, 1835-1870,"in *Swords and Ploughshares: War and Agriculture in Western Canada,* ed. R.C. Macleod (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1993), 239-262.; W. Leland Clark, "The Place of the Métis Within the Agricultural Economy of the Red River in the 1840s and 1850s," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* III, 1 (1983): 69-84.; George Herman Sprenger, "The Métis Nation: Buffalo Hunting versus Agriculture in the Red River Settlement, 1810-1870," in *Native People, Native Lands: Canadian Indians, Inuit and Métis*, ed. Bruce Alden Cox (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1987), 120-135.
[41] Ens, "Métis Agriculture," 242.
[42] Clark, "Agricultural Economy,".

> short, they do all things out of season, and in the multiplicity of their pursuits oftener lose the advantage of all than accomplish one; verifying the old proverb of too many irons in the fire. While they are planning this and that little labour, the summer passes by, and winter threatens them often with their crops unsecured, their houses unmudded, and their cattle unprovided for.[43]

Yet, gardening fit well with the Métis seasonal cycle because planting and harvesting allowed Métis to continue with the buffalo hunt. Métis families could maintain their subsistence economy of harvesting and preservation of wild meat, fruits and vegetables, mixed with small-scale agricultural production, providing labour when necessary for planting and harvesting. In this environment men and women continued to fill complementary economic roles in relation to food harvesting and production, ensuring the survival of the family.

When taking up plots of land, Métis families looked to familiar systems of land tenure as practiced at Red River and in other Métis communities across the west, selecting lands in long narrow plots that fronted the water to ensure access to multiple resources (Figure 5.7 and 5.8). They built homes close to the lakes or rivers for easy access to potable water, water for cleaning and washing and because the river remained a means of transporting goods. The structure of these lots included areas for vegetable gardens, hay lands and grazing areas for cattle and horses, as well as access to wood lots. The long, narrow structure of river lots ensured that residences were close to one another, thus supporting the extended family nature of the Métis.

[43] Ross, *Red River*, 193-195.

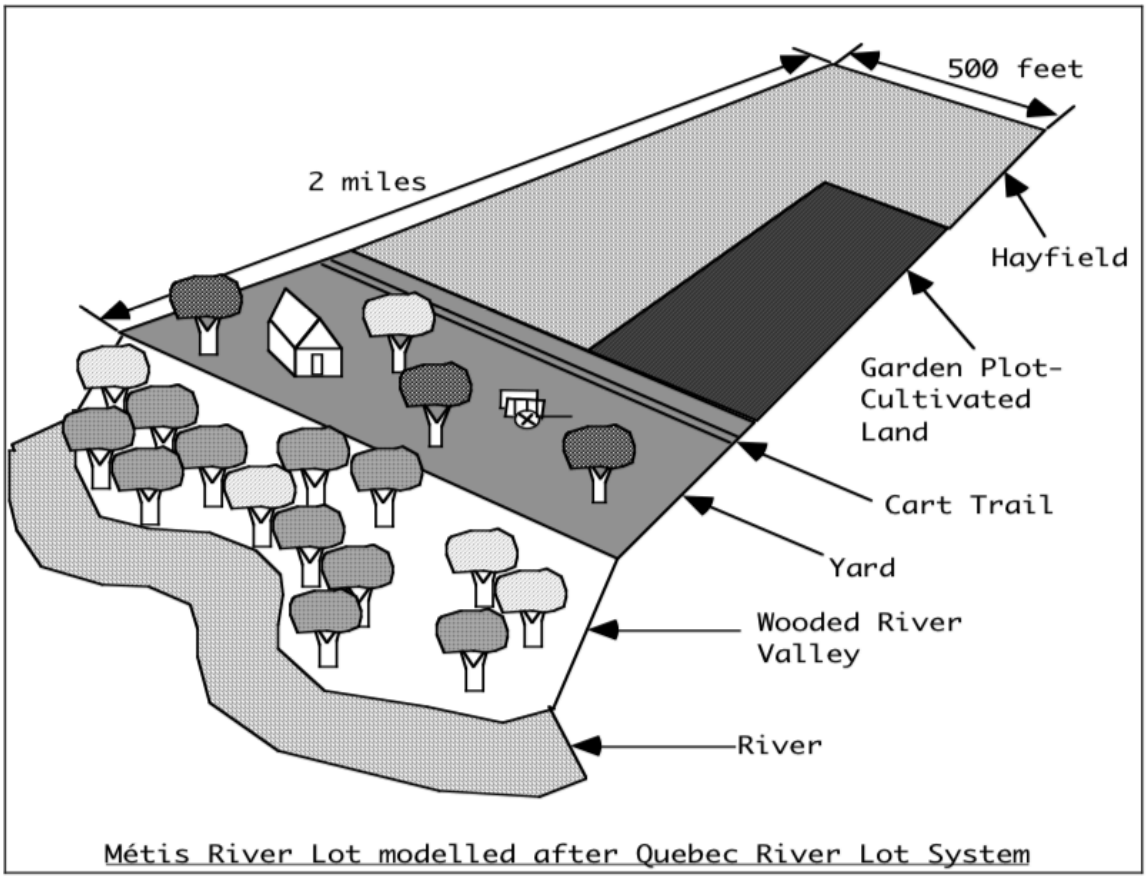

Figure 5.7: River lot farm[44]

[44] Todd Paquin, Patrick Young and Darren R. Préfontaine, "Métis Farmers," Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute.
http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/00718.Farmers.pdf

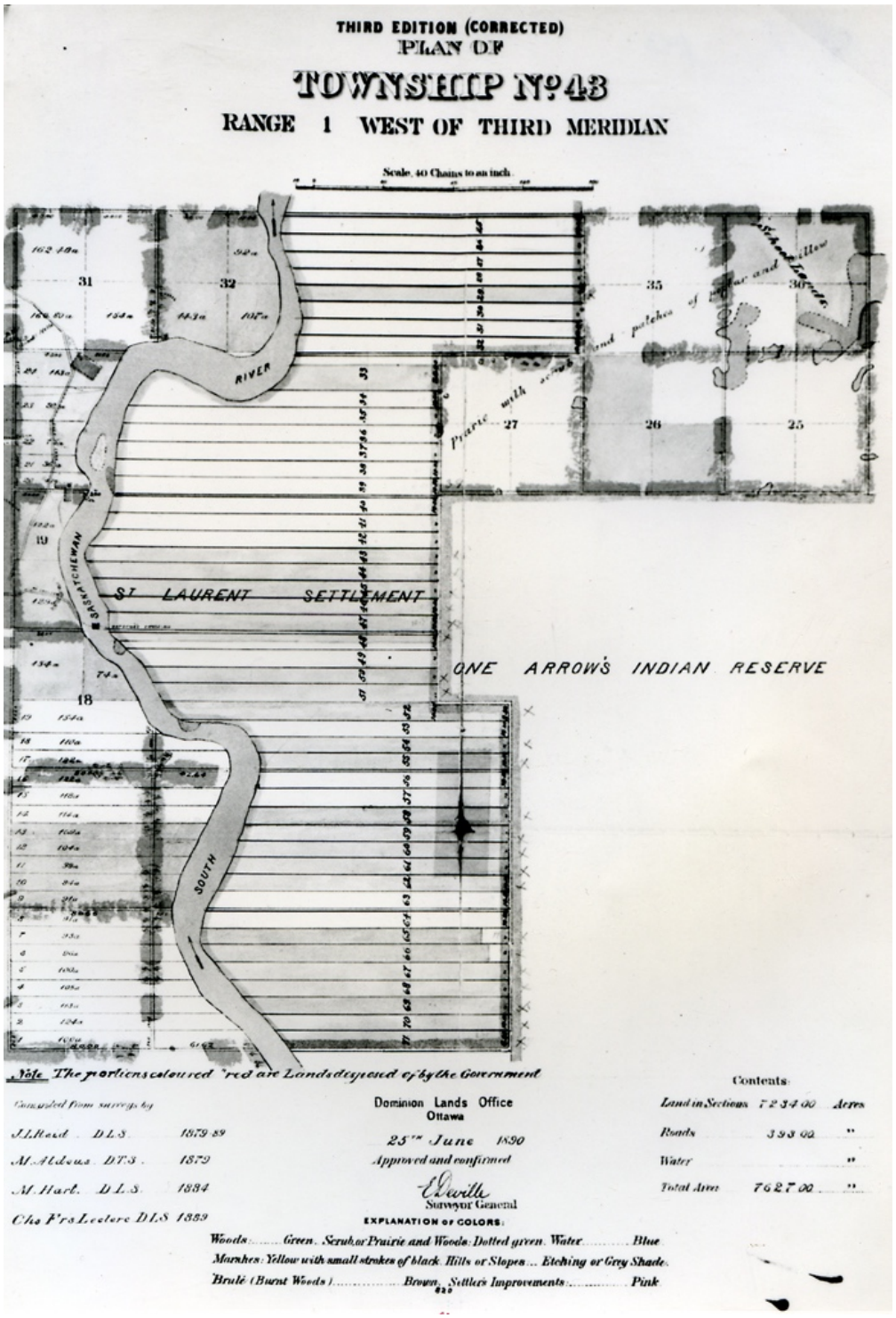

Figure 5.8: River Lot Survey (Twp 43, Range 1, W3), St. Laurent Settlement, Saskatchewan, c. 1890[45]

[45] Township Plan, 1890. Township 43, Range 1, West of Third Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey Maps, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

This settlement pattern was not unique to the Qu'Appelle Valley. Other Métis settlements of the period, such as St. Paul des Métis, Batoche, St. Laurent and Isbister's Settlement in Prince Albert, employed these recognizable land tenure practices when reestablishing themselves away from Red River.[46] When compared to the organized survey of river lots in these communities, the plots of land along the Qu'Appelle Lakes and River were less structured (Figure 5.9). Father DeCorby of the St Florent Mission described Métis land holdings as almost haphazard. According to DeCorby, "each cut his piece after his own fashion. This one took a little point. That one a stream, where there was a little wood and good lands; another marked for himself a good length on the little piece of woods which covers the southern declivity of the Valley."[47] The way that Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley took up land was not indiscriminate, but followed social customs and recognizable land tenure practices.

[46] For a detailed examination of Métis resettlement, See: Paget J. Code, "Les Autres Métis: The English Métis in the Prince Albert Settlement, 1862-1887" (Masters of Arts thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2008).

[47] Father DeCorby, Qu'Appelle Mission to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, 1 October 1874, Enclosing Indian Branch File No.4145 covering Rev. Pere DeCorby's Explanation re: Manners in which Half-breeds have relocated, File HB 61, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol.171, Half-Breed Files, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

Figure 5.9: River Lots Qu'Appelle Valley (Twp 19, Range 12, W2), c. 1883[48]

Cowie observed that farming along the Qu'Appelle Lakes was possible, and "[had] been tried with varying success; crops of wheat, barley, Indian corn, potatoes and common kitchen vegetables, in good seasons, turning out fair returns. Abundant water, pasture and hay and an open country make stock-raising profitable and easy."[49] According to Cowie, it was only the Métis' enduring reliance on the hunt that impeded their success. Most families only practiced small-scale agriculture, continuing to supplement their economy with the buffalo hunt and other subsistence practices but a few families moved away from the buffalo hunt and farmed on a larger scale. Visiting the region in August 1881 with Governor-General Lord Lorne, Reverend Doctor James MacGregor, and W.H. Williams, Special Correspondent for the *Toronto Globe* echoed the quality of land and potential for agriculture. MacGregor recounted a settlement of Métis farmers "cutting down splendid crops of wheat and barley" as well as Catholic Mission priests with well-tended gardens of "potatoes of marvelous size, water-melons,

[48] Township Plan, 1883. Township 19, Range 12 West of Second Meridian. Dominion Lands Survey Maps, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[49] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 483.

musk-melons, tomatoes, French beans, and cabbages."[50] Like MacGregor, Williams recalled the capacity for agricultural achievement.

> The bend of the river often takes in the entire width of the Valley, and some of the most beautiful claims I have yet seen are included in these broad, rounded points, where a neat little farm may be seen bounded by a single curve of the river in the exact shade of an ox bow. That these slopes are extremely fertile, the rich growth of wild pea vine, succulent grasses, and a profusion of all sorts of prairie flowers gives abundant evidence; but as one passes further up the Valley and comes upon the first squatter's claim he becomes convinced beyond all doubt of the wondrous riches of the soil. Here, wheat, oats, barley, corn, potatoes and nearly all sorts of grain and root crops may be seen flourishing luxuriantly...[51]

In the Valley, Williams met Antoine Larocque, who he noted had "a remarkably pretty and promising claim."[52] A retired buffalo hunter and trader, Larocque and his wife Rosalie Laplante settled in the Qu'Appelle Valley to a life of farming and trading by the early 1870s.[53] Williams described Larocque as "a wealthy and most genial representative of that extremely genial and hospitable class to be found pioneering everywhere in the North-West, the French half-breeds."[54] The party camped at Larocque's for the night and the following morning they feasted on "fresh vegetables in great variety, smoked and dried buffalo meat of the finest quality, and the richest and best of fresh milk, and in fact all the comforts and luxuries with which the settler's table is like to be loaded."[55] Following breakfast, Williams toured Larocque's claim, finding in the garden "all sorts of ordinary vegetables flourishing luxuriantly, and in a fairly advanced state for the time of year." In Larocque's wheat fields, he recalled finding,

> as fine a sample of wheat as I ever saw at any of our Provincial Exhibitions. The whole crop was within a day or two of being fit for harvesting… In short, it was absolute perfection in quantity, size, weight, texture and colour. As Mr. LaRoch only commenced farming the year before last, he was not in a position to give me figures as to the yield per acre…I should judge that Mr. LaRoch's wheat crop

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[50]Helen Ruth Keay, *Lord Lorne's Expedition to the North-West, Reported by Rev. Dr. James MacGregor, 1881* (Regina: University of Regina Printing Services, 2004), 34.
[51] W.H. Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West: Journal of a Trip from Toronto to the Rocky Mountains Via Lake Superior, Thunder Bay, Rat Portage, Winnipeg, Qu'Appelle, Prince Albert, Battleford, Fort Calgary and Fort McLeod and Return Via Edmonton, Touchwood Hills, Etc.* (Toronto: Hunter Rose and Company, 1882), 65.
[52] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 65.
[53] Antoine Larocque, Application for Patent, 8 Aug 1883, File 290.5, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[54] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 67.
[55] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 67.

> (which, however, I think is exceptionally good, even for the North-West) would run as high as thirty-five to forty bushels to the acre, while his crop of oats and barley are proportionally good.[56]

On the party's return journey through the North-West, Williams inquired about Larocque's progress when he met Thomas Kavanaugh, who he described as a wealthy farmer from Qu'Appelle. Kavanaugh had forty acres broken, twenty of which were "barley, wheat, oats and roots," and the only threshing machine in the region.[57] According to Kavanaugh, Larocque had harvested 120 bushels of wheat for five acres sewn, or 24 bushels per acre.[58] His crops "were not in any way superior to the average to be found in the Qu'Appelle Valley."[59] In fact, the average yield in the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1881 according to Williams was thirty-five bushels of wheat to the acre, thirty to forty bushels of barley per acre, sixty bushels of oats per acre and 250 bushels of potatoes per acre.[60] These high yields should not have been a surprise to Williams considering Larocque and others farmed newly broken sod.

By 1883, Larocque had 20 acres under cultivation.[61] He was not, however, the only Métis to achieve some progress in farming. When Dominion Land Surveyor T. R. Hewson began survey in 1881, he found at least 19 individuals with claims on Township 21 in Ranges 13 and 14 West of the Second Meridian.[62] Most had small claims from one to eight acres and six individuals had more than 10 acres broken. The largest of these were Norbert Welsh; Larocque; St. Pierre Poitras; Joseph Poitras; George Fisher; and, Peter LaPierre.[63] Outside the scope of Hewson's survey, a handful of Métis also had large operations of more than 10 acres. By the mid-1860s, Alexander Fisher was farming 25

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[56] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 68.
[57] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 224-225.
[58] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 225.
[59] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 225.
[60] Williams, *Manitoba and the North-West,* 225.
[61] Antoine Larocque, Application for Patent, 8 Aug 1883, File 290.5, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[62] T.R. Hewson, Dominion Land Surveyor to the Minister of the Interior, Report on the Survey of Claims, May 1881, Survey Files. No. 226. Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[63] The largest claims included: Norbert Welsh with 28.9 acres broken; Larocque with 26.99 acres broken; St. Pierre Poitras with 26.14 acres; Joseph Poitras with 26 acres; George Fisher with 15.7 acres; and, Peter LaPierre with 10.22 acres broken.

acres and, by 1877, Hilaire Boucher was farming 50 acres.[64] Others included Cuthbert St. Denis who farmed 17 acres, Thomas Desjarlais 15 acres and Xavier Perreault 12 acres (Figure 5.10).[65] Individuals such as these farmed larger plots but many worked parcels of less than ten acres with just enough land under cultivation for a vegetable garden and small hay and barley field. A significant number, like those identified by Hewson, were small farms under five acres.

[64] Simon Blondeau, Application for Patent, 24 March 1884, File. 290.22, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Alexander Fisher, Application for Patent, 4 October 1883, File 290.8, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[65] Antoine Hamelin, Application for Patent, 4 June 1884, File 290.31, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Xavier Perreault, Application for Patent, 27 August 1883, No. 290.13, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Thomas Beaulieau, Application for Patent, 31 August 1883, No. 290.12, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Figure 5.10: Cuthbert St. Denis, c. 1934[66]

Despite the small size of many of these farms, when examined within the context of the extended family spatial organization, some families had sizable farming operations. In this context, the extended Klyne family farmed a considerable amount of land (Figure 5.11). For instance, by 1883 Madeleine Klyne had eight acres under cultivation and had been farming the land for at least a decade.[67] Her sons-in-law Thomas Kavanaugh and Thomas Desjarlais had 10 and 15 acres respectively.[68] Klyne's son,

[66] Cuthbert St. Denis, R-B2299, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[67] Madeleine Klyne, Application for Patent, 20 July 1885, File 290.68, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[68] Thomas Kavanaugh, Application for Patent, 10 July 1883, File 290.19, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Andre, who began farming in 1878, farmed 10 acres.[69] By 1884, her son, Michel was farming 24 acres on two parcels of land. The first was patented in his name, while the second was patented in the name of his wife, Marie. This was land that her deceased husband, Joseph Gosselin, had patented.[70] In addition, Michel's son, John, farmed 5 acres. In total, Madeleine Klyne's extended family farmed over 70 acres of land. Although they did not farm collectively, kinship obligations and responsibilities would have ensured they help one another out when required.

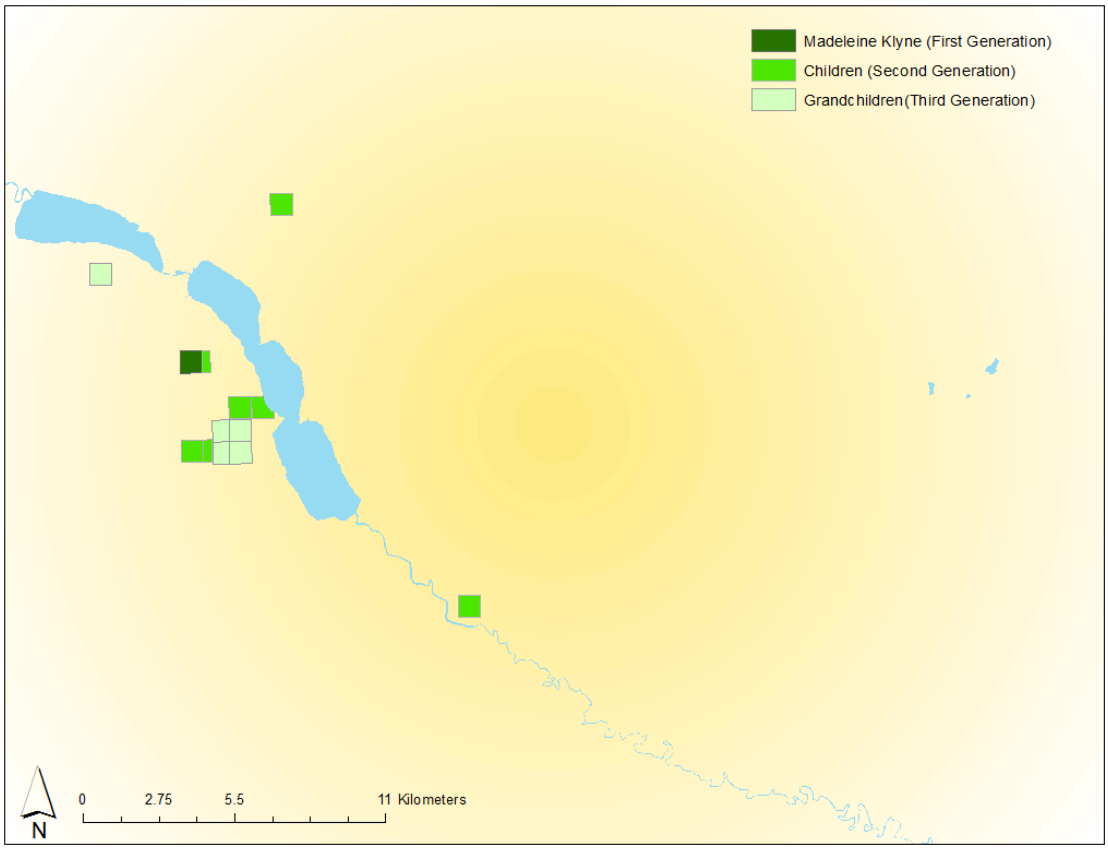

Figure 5.11: Klyne farmland

Regardless of the size of their farms, the Métis overwhelmingly remained intent on maintaining a mixed subsistence, relying on hunting, fishing and gathering wild foods,

[69] Marie Klyne, Declaration, 24 October 1884, File 75387, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Andre Klyne, Application for Patent, 31 August 1883, File 290.18, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[70] Marie Klyne, Declaration, 24 October 1884, File 75387, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

supplemented with small-scale agricultural production. This mixed subsistence economy allowed families to continue the complementary roles filled by men and women as practiced during the buffalo hunt, where all members of the family contributed necessary labour. Families and communities spatially organized themselves as they had when hunting buffalo, in large extended families and along hunt kinship lines, taking up residence next to, or in proximity to one another. When taking up plots of land, these families recognized themselves as having shared rights, responsibilities and territory, and a sense of unity. This was demonstrated in the petitions they forwarded to government seeking recognition of their occupancy.

Conflicting Land Tenure - Protecting a Métis Worldview

As families settled into living year-round in the Valley, they recognized the necessity of protecting their land and way of life from incoming settlement and encroachment. Beginning in the early 1870s out of concern about the future of the buffalo hunt but also with changes in their political and social environment, heads of Métis families began petitioning the Dominion Government for protection of their rights to hunt and fish in the region, of their river lot land holding practices and for clarification of the Government's intention regarding lands in the Qu'Appelle Valley. Concern for their rights intensified amidst growing tensions in the Red River region in the late 1860s, following the transfer of Rupert's Land and the entrance of Manitoba into Confederation.

The Transfer of Rupert's Land, the Red River Resistance 1869-70 and Scrip

With Canadian Confederation in 1867, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and the new Dominion Government quickly began looking west, eager to annex Rupert's Land to expand and build the new nation. Historian Doug Owram argues that the acquisition and transfer of Rupert's Land was vital to the future prosperity of Canada and the British Empire.[71] Signs of growing social and political unrest among the Métis at Red River accelerated the desire for expansion. Canadian expansionists' ideas of the North-West as no longer an inhospitable wilderness but a rich agricultural garden and place of

[71] Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

settlement was central to meeting their goals of rapid western expansion and development.[72] With the transfer, control over the territory shifted from the HBC to the British Crown, who then ceded the land to the Dominion of Canada. As part of the deal, the HBC received £300,000 and 20 percent of the territory's arable land. Conducted as a real estate transaction, the transfer was much more complex than parties anticipated. Most importantly, it failed to consider existing First Nations and Métis residents of Rupert's Land. Although the new Government did agree to treaties with First Nations that would extinguish land title, they gave almost no consideration to Métis title. The Government did not consult the Métis, nor did they inform them of the date or conditions of the transfer.

Historian William L. Morton argues that the Métis did not oppose the transfer of Rupert's Land, but were concerned about what a new order of government would mean for their way of life.[73] The predominately Roman Catholic Métis in the Red River region feared for the preservation of their religion, land rights and culture under Canadian control. According to Morton, it was not that the Métis could not adapt, but that Government had not consulted the Métis about the transfer. Exclusion from the process created tension, anger and anxiety amongst the Métis at a time when they already faced increasing pressure from Protestant settlers from Eastern Canada moving into the Red River region. The Métis acted to ensure safeguards were in place to protect their interests.

In the summer of 1869, Government intention to survey the region before the actual transfer of authority alarmed the Métis. The Métis feared the loss of their river-lot farms because most did not have clear title to the land they occupied and Government had given them no assurances that they intended to respect Métis occupancy rights. The appointment of William McDougall, a well-known Canadian expansionist unsympathetic to the Métis, as the territory's first lieutenant-governor only fueled tensions and Métis fears. In early October, a party of Métis blocked the survey, barricading the road from Red River to Pembina, preventing McDougall from entering the colony. As the survey party withdrew, the Métis began to organize. A month later, Louis Riel, an educated

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[72] Owram, *Promise of Eden*.; George Colpitts, *Game in the Garden: A Human History of Wildlife in Western Canada to 1940* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).
[73] W.L. Morton, "Introduction," in *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal and Other Papers Relative to the Red River Resistance of 1869-1870.* ed. W.L. Morton (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1956).

Métis from a prominent family emerged as leader and Métis spokesman. The Métis seized Upper Fort Garry, the main HBC trading post at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and declared themselves a provisional government.[74] These events were political acts symbolic of Métis determination to stand up for their rights. They were also largely peaceful acts, until the execution of Thomas Scott, one of a group of English-speaking Ontario settlers opposed to Métis action. Scott's execution inflamed many Protestants in Ontario and hatred toward the Métis. Although the Dominion Government remained willing to negotiate with Riel, they refused to grant him an unconditional amnesty.

Morton argues that in events before Scott's execution, the Métis believed themselves politically justified and not disloyal to the new Government. They were merely defending rights that the existing government was ineffective in meeting.[75] Due to Métis opposition and unrest at Red River, the Canadian Government refused to assume control over the territory on the agreed upon date of 1 December 1869. This encouraged the Métis who planned to hold the Fort until Government agreed to negotiate the terms by which Red River and Manitoba would enter Confederation. For the Métis, foremost in their minds as a condition for entry was the protection of their land rights.

Manitoba became a province with the passing of the Manitoba Act on 15 July 1870. Section 31 of the Act set aside 1.4 million acres of public lands to Métis heads of families and children of half-breed heads of families for "the extinguishment of Indian Title to the lands in the Province."[76] Although the Act did not specify the land distribution process, it did identify who was eligible to participate and served as the framework to extinguish Indian title held by Métis in Manitoba. This title was based on their occupancy of the region prior to the imposition of Canadian authority over the territory. Under the Act, Half-breed heads of families were to receive 160 acres whereas children of Half-breed heads of families were to receive 240 acres. The scrip process, spelled out through Order-in-Councils, was an administrative and bureaucratic way to

[74] Members of the Provisional Government in 1869 included: Charles Larocque, Pierre Delorme, Thomas Bunn, François Xavier Pagée, Ambroise Lépine, Jean Baptiste Tourond, Thomas Spence, Pierre Poitras, John Bruce, Louis Riel, William Bernard O'Donoghue, François Dauphinais, Hugh F. O. O'Lome and Paul Proulx.
[75] Morton, "Introduction,".
[76] Manitoba Act, 1870, Cap. 3, Sec. 31.

extinguish Métis title to land. Individual claimants appeared before a Scrip Commissioner, completed an application and swore an affidavit. If approved, they received a paper certificate for land or money scrip that when presented at a Dominion Lands Office applied to surveyed land. A land scrip certificate (as opposed to tangible land) represented an entitlement to either 160 or 240 acres, while a money scrip certificate entitled the bearer to $160 or $240 worth of land which the Government valued at $1.00 per acre. Considered real property, land scrip had certain limitations on its sale, whereas money scrip, considered personal property, was much easier to dispose of. Scrip coupons did not include an individual's name, making them easily exchangeable by the bearer. The ease of exchange of scrip resulted in its bulk ending up in the hands of speculators. Indeed, Anthropologist Joe Sawchuk maintains that

> scrip quickly became a tool of land speculators, who used it to gain title to large blocks of land, or who sold it to third parties for a quick profit. It also became a commodity which banks used to create investments, and many family fortunes (including those of some of the most politically prominent families of the West) originated in the scrip trade.[77]

Scholars argue that administrative problems created frustration and many claimants met significant challenges throughout the process.[78] Not only did they face language and literacy barriers in completing applications and affidavits, but misinformation and misunderstanding plagued the process. There was also no shortage of fraud. Having to appear before the Scrip Commissioner and the Dominion Lands Agent interfered with the Métis seasonal cycle, and land speculators were consistently present, eager to buy up any, and all, available Métis scrip for a fraction of its value. The most considerable challenge, however, was the slow pace of implementation. Distribution did

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[77] Joe Sawchuk, Patricia Sawchuk, Theresa Ferguson and the Métis Association of Alberta, *Métis Land Rights in Alberta: A Political History* (Edmonton: Métis Association of Alberta, 1981), 88.

[78] Camie Augustus, "The Scrip Solution: The North-West Métis Scrip Policy, 1885-1887" (Masters of Arts thesis, University of Calgary, 2005).; Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*.; Gerhard J. Ens, "Métis Land Rights in Manitoba," *Manitoba History* Number 5, Spring (1983). http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/05/Métislands.shtml; Frank Tough, "*As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and The Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996.; Frank Tough and Erin McGregor, "'The Rights to the Lands May be Transferred': Archival Records as Colonial Text – A Narrative of Métis Scrip," in *Natives and Settlers – Now and Then: Historical Issues and Current Perspectives on Treaties and Land Claims in Canada*, ed. Paul W. DePasquale, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007): 33-63.; Brad Milne, "The Historiography of Métis Land Dispersal, 1870-1890," *Manitoba History*, 30 (Autumn 1995), 30-41.; D.N. Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988).

not begin until 1876 and by this time many Métis had already left Manitoba permanently, making it difficult for those already outside Manitoba to receive their scrip.

Historians have debated whether the Canadian Government acted in good faith in negotiating and fulfilling the promises outlined in the Manitoba Act and if Government deliberately designed the scrip process to keep land out of Métis hands. Writing in the 1930s, G.F.G. Stanley argues that although characterized by a spirit of procrastination, "ministerial incompetence, parliamentary indifference and administrative delay," Government acted in good faith and not in conspiracy to defraud the Métis.[79] Stanley's interpretation remained dominant until the 1980s when challenged by historian Douglas N. Sprague. Based primarily on the letters and papers of John A. Macdonald, Sprague argues that the Government of Canada had no intention of fulfilling the obligations under the Manitoba Act.[80] The Canadian Government served to undermine Métis land rights by passing legislation to make it easier to dispossess the Métis of their land through the scrip process and that all levels of government and private individuals were duplicitous in this. Through legislation, delay and administrative shuffle, Government failed to honour Métis land tenure or the promises made in the Manitoba Act. Historian Jennifer Hayter contends that for the Canadian Government, the scrip process became a pragmatic solution to the problem of Métis rights. There was no shortage of incompetence in the distribution of scrip. The process, she argues, supported individual land ownership and had the potential to transform the Métis into modern agricultural settlers; alternatively, they would sell the land to white settlers. Either way, Canada would achieve its desired goal of acquiring Métis land for agricultural settlement.[81]

The Métis did not flourish in Manitoba after 1870, and Ottawa granted no amnesty for Riel or members of his provisional government, who fled into exile just before the arrival of a column of British and Canadian troops under Colonel Wolseley in August 1870. Although the Métis had won on major objectives including a distinct province with guaranteed land and cultural rights, their victory was hollow. The provision

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[79] G.F.G. Stanley, *The Birth of Western Canada: A History of the Riel Rebellions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961), 191, 244.
[80] Sprague, *Canada and the Métis.*
[81] Jennifer Hayter, "Racially 'Indian', Legally 'White': The Canadian State's Struggle to Categorize the Métis, 1850-1900" (PhD. Diss., University of Toronto, 2017.), 218-219.; See also: Milne, "Historiography,".

of scrip failed to secure a Métis land base and they soon found themselves with little choice but to disperse from Red River. Many moved west to the places they had wintered over when hunting buffalo, joining relatives already in the North-West and settling there year-round. Historian Gerhard Ens argues that this was not a forced dispersal, but the Métis chose voluntarily to follow the buffalo herds westward, settling permanently in their old wintering sites.[82] Regardless, migration westward after 1870 accelerated and made permanent the seasonal pattern of wintering on the plains that Métis hunters had followed since the 1840s.

For Qu'Appelle Métis, the experience in Manitoba remained fresh in their minds. Despite living in the Valley, most remained connected through extended family to the Red River parishes and some had applied for scrip. Others had not participated in the scrip process, having been outside of Manitoba on 15 July 1870, the date the Manitoba Act came into effect. The fact that they believed themselves to possess unextinguished rights loomed large.

The Qu'Appelle Petition, May 1873

In early May 1873, intent on having their land rights and occupancy recognized, John Fisher and ten other Métis petitioned Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories Alexander Morris in a public address.[83] This was the first in a series of petitions submitted by the Qu'Appelle Métis. Acknowledging that they had received the support of all the Métis of the North-West and the assurance of the friendship of the Cree, Assiniboine and Saulteax Nations, the petitioners asserted that peace existed amongst the Métis in the North-West and that they would continue to encourage peace and respect for the Government amongst their neighboring First Nations. Pledging their support for Government, they made it clear that they understood their political milieu. Without

[82] Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*.
[83] John Fisher and others Fort Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor, Petition, 3 May 1873, re: administration of Indian Lands, File HB 58, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada. Signatories included: John Fisher, Alexander Fisher, Joseph Desmarais, Pierre Nomme [Desnomme], Pierre Janneault, Francois Laframboise, Pierre Peltier, St. Pierre Poitras, Joseph Racette, Andre Protche [Trottier], Charles Protche [Trottier]. Not all these individuals were to remain in the Valley, as brothers Andre Trottier and Charles Trottier as well as Francois Laframboise were to eventually reside at La Prairie Ronde on the South Saskatchewan River, south of present-day Saskatoon.

doubt, the assurances of peace and support included in the petitions were made to convince the Government that there would not be a repeat of political unrest in the North-West as in Manitoba in 1869-70.

In the petition, Fisher and others sought protection over the plots of land they occupied. They recognized the transfer of Rupert's Land had annexed the North-West to the Canadian Government, and like in Manitoba, Métis in the North-West did not have clear title to the land they occupied. They well understood that the Government intended to, and already was, giving preference for land to incoming settlers, not the Métis. The Métis asked the Government to protect their land holdings "from strangers supplanting…and disturbing us." They asked for assurances of title to the land they occupied "in compensation of our rights to the lands of the country as Métis."[84] Petitioners argued that the Government had not adequately managed Métis land rights in Manitoba and treated the Métis in Red River poorly. It had been three years since the creation of the Manitoba Act and promises made to the Métis remained unfulfilled. Petitioners wanted assurances that Officials would not treat them the same, and that they would fulfill the "bright promises" made. The petitioners wanted guarantees that Government would deal with the issue of Métis land rights in a timely and fair manner.

In addition to protection for their individual plots of land and recognition of outstanding Métis land rights, the petitioners also drew attention to larger political issues concerning them and Métis across the west. Connections between the Qu'Appelle families and those in Red River remained strong, and the Qu'Appelle Métis remained socially, politically and economically loyal to them, despite their relocation to the Qu'Appelle Valley. Qu'Appelle Métis petitioners asked for a general pardon for Louis Riel and his principal supporters because Métis could not visit Red River without feeling an increasing stigma from the public and mistreatment by soldiers for their actions and support of Riel in 1869-70. They expressed their belief that in 1869-70 Governor William McDougall had acted without the Queen's instruction in "declaring war" on the Métis in Red River. They also demonstrated their frustration that following the resistance, the

[84] John Fisher and others Fort Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor, Petition, 3 May 1873, re: administration of Indian Lands, File HB 58, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

Government gave political appointments to Dr. John Christian Schultz and Colonel John Stoughton Dennis. A surveyor, Dennis came to the Red River colony prior to the insurrection with the intent to survey the land for settlement and was leader of the survey party halted by the Métis, while Schultz, an influential member of the Canadian party, worked staunchly to overthrow Riel's provisional Government in 1869-70.[85] Both highly unsympathetic to the Métis and the recognition of their rights, their political appointments were seen by the Métis as an attempt by Government to fuel further tensions among the Métis.

Fisher's petition initially fell on deaf ears. A month later, Morris replied, disregarding the Métis' requests, instead chastising them for styling themselves a 'Council.' Undoubtedly cautious from the experience in Manitoba where the Métis formed a provisional government in absence of existing authority, Morris reminded the petitioners that the Laws of England were in effect in the North-West. The North-West Council, not the petitioner's 'Council,' was responsible.[86] Morris disregarded the request for Riel's pardon, replying he did not possess the authority to grant such a request, but that it rested with the Queen. Government inaction did not deter the Métis. Instead it strengthened their resolve to have their voices heard.

Treaty Four Petition, September 1874

Just over a year later, the Métis again petitioned Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris, presenting themselves as, "the half-breeds of the Lake Qu'Appelle and environs…in their name and in the name of all their brethren scattered over the prairies."[87] The timing of this petition was prepared immediately before Treaty 4 negotiation in the Qu'Appelle Valley, a significant event to the Métis eager to protect their own land holdings at a time when First Nations were entering into negotiations with

[85] Colin Read, "The Red River Rebellion and J.S. Dennis, "Lieutenant and Conservator of the Peace." *Manitoba History*, Number 3, (1982).; Lovell Clark, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, John Christian Schultz. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schultz_john_christian_12E.html

[86] Alexander Morris to John Fisher and others, 4 June 1873, File HB 58. RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171, Department of the Interior, Dominion Lands Branch, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887. Library and Archives Canada.

[87] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

the Crown to ensure their economic future. Calling for the recognition of their rights and guarantees to the plots of land they already occupied in the Valley, 31 heads of families signed on to the 11 September 1874 petition.

Although the Government collectively refused Qu'Appelle Métis entry into Treaty 4 in 1874, there were many instances throughout the 1870s where Métis did in fact enter treaty.[88] Historian Heather Devine argues, that by the time government entered treaty there had still been no provision for the enumeration of Métis communitites or the extinguishment of Métis rights in the North-West. As a result, the Government allowed Métis to enter Treaty as Indians, if they wished. Because of this, several groups of Métis who "hunted and trapped for their livelihood, and/or had extensive kin connections with specific bands of Indians, chose to enter Treaties Four, Five and Six."[89] The decision to allow Métis to enter treaty was complicated. This was largely due to ambiguous and changing Government definitions of who was and who was not an "Indian". The Indian Act, 1868, defined Indians in a way that included many Métis. According the 1868 Act, Indians included:

> Firstly. All persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular tribe, band or body of Indians interested in such lands or immoveable property, and their descendants;
>
> Secondly. All persons residing among such Indians, whose parents were or are, or either of them was or is, descended on either side from Indians or an Indian reputed to belong to the particular tribe, band or body of Indians interested in such lands or immoveable property, and the descendants of all such persons; And,

[88] See Devine, *Own Themselves*.; Robert Alexander Innes, *Elder Brother and the Law of the People: Contemporary Kinship and Cowessess First Nation* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013).; Miriam McNab, "George Gordon First Nations Women: Partners in Survival" (PhD diss., University of Saskatchewan, 2017).; For discussion of the Treaty making process See: J.R. Miller, *Compact, Contract, Covenant: Aboriginal Treaty-making in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).; Arthur Ray, J.R. Miller and Frank J. Tough, *Bounty and Benevolence: A History of Saskatchewan Treaties* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).; Alexander Morris, *The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* (Toronto: Cole's Publishing, 1979).; Jean Friesen, "Magnificent Gifts: The Treaties of Canada with the Indians of the North-West, 1869-76. *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada,* Series V. Vol.1 (1996): 41-51.

[89] Devine, *Own Themselves*, 144.

> Thirdly. All women lawfully married to any of the persons included in the several classes hereinbefore designated; the children issue of such marriages, and their descendants.[90]

By this definition, Métis women who married treaty men gained treaty status, along with any children they might have. In addition, Métis who lived among First Nations or had at least one parent considered an Indian or living as an Indian, would have qualified for entrance into treaty.

Just as complicated, was the definition of who was, or was not, considered Métis. At the time of Treaty negotiation, Indian Commissioner Alexander Morris classified Métis into one of three categories. The first class, like those Métis at St. Laurent, Qu'Appelle and Edmonton, he recognized as farmers and property owners because they made their living by farming and trading. The second class of Métis, he viewed as Indians because they lived with and like Indians. The third class, he had more difficulty defining. This group, he described did not farm but lived "after the habits of the Indians, by the pursuit of the buffalo and the chase."[91] According to Morris, they lived "a wandering life," following the buffalo and had no permanent homes. He recognized the economic similarity to First Nations livelihoods, and the impact of the collapsing buffalo herds on the Métis, but he did not agree that this was reason enough to allow their entrance into treaty. Rather, he suggested land be set aside for them, when and if they were to settle into an agricultural lifestyle. Should this be the case, he also recommended that they receive some assistance helping them adjust to an agricultural economy.[92] Morris did not recognize the Métis as having rights equal to First Nations, but understood the complexity of discerning where the Métis fit.

Kinship relationships between First Nations and Métis families and communities were complex and boundaries or distinctions between them were, in practice, often blurred. Indigenous studies scholars Robert Innes and Miriam McNab reveal the frequency at which Métis or Half-breeds entered Treaty 4 in southern Saskatchewan. Innes argues that band membership at Cowessess reserves was historically flexible and inclusive of not only Plains Cree, but also Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Métis and it was

[90] Indian Act, 1868, Cap. 42, Sec. 15.
[91] Morris, *Treaties of Canada*, 294.
[92] Morris, *Treaties of Canada* 295.

because of this fluidity that Métis families entered Treaty with Cowessess' band.[93] Similarly, McNab argues that a number of Half-breed families entered Treaty with George Gordon's band because their lifestyle was indistinguishable from their First Nations relatives.[94] Despite this, she contends, officials attempted to find distinctions between First Nations and Half-breed members for decades after signing. As a result, both assert that distinctions between First Nations and Métis band members mattered more to Indian Agents and Government officials then to Indigenous peoples themselves.

In the Qu'Appelle Valley, First Nations and Métis families intermarried and family networks extended into and across First Nations communities. Studying the large extended Desjarlais family, Devine demonstrates the complexity of cultural identity that existed for many families and how this undoubtedly influenced their decision to take treaty.[95] By the 1860s, brothers, Antoine and Baptiste "Nishecabo" Desjarlais were living in the Qu'Appelle regions with their grown children and their grandchildren. She contends that despite both men dying before the signing of Treaty 4, the choices their children made whether to enter treaty reveals much about their cultural identification. HBC trader at Fort Qu'Appelle, Isaac Cowie recounted his experiences with Nishecabo, describing that he identified more as Saulteaux than Métis, and that he followed Indigenous spirituality and knew and practiced medicine. Indeed, he described Desjarlais as "decidedly more Saulteau than French in tongue and tone."[96] These cultural worldviews and spiritual leanings undoubtedly influenced his children and their decision to take treaty. Nishecabo's children took treaty with Muskowequan's Saulteaux band north of the Qu'Appelle Valley, whereas only some of Antoine's children took treaty. By the time of treaty, most of Antoine's children had already taken up year-round residence on plots of land in the Qu'Appelle Valley and were engaged in small-scale agriculture. Devine indicates that two of Antoine's daughters took treaty with their husbands while his sons, Michel and Baptiste, as well as his many grandsons did not.[97] It is unclear which of Antoine's daughters Devine is describing, but it is likely not Francoise. She did

[93] Innes, *Elder Brother*.
[94] McNab, *First Nations Women,* 50-51.
[95] Devine, *Own Themselves*, 144-145; Morris, *Treaties of Canada,* 356-362.
[96] Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 416-417.
[97] Devine, *Own Themselves*, 144-145.

take treaty, yet her husband Simon Blondeau did not.[98] He was however one of the signatories of the signatories to the 1874 petition, along with Antoine's son Michel, and his brother-in-law, Alex Fisher. Fisher was married to Antoine's eldest daughter, Susanne. Although not all of Antoine's children initially took treaty, they did ask for the same treaty privilege as their relatives and extended families.

The Métis did not want their petitioning to derogate from the treaty process in which their First Nations relatives were negotiating. They simply wanted to have their voices heard and "be remembered in the various arrangements that the Government may make with the Indians." In their petition they affirmed that, "in all these demands the Half-Breeds have no intention of depriving the Indians of their rights, but merely claim the recognition and respect of their own, and are disposed to live with the Indians as with brothers and with friends."[99]

The Métis were eager to have the treaty concluded and used their presence at the negotiations and their existing relationships with the negotiating Chiefs and others to leverage what political support they could. Petitioners, Baptiste Davis, Pierre Poitras, Pierre Desnomme, Joseph McKay, Pierre LaPierre were present during the negotiations, signing the treaty as witnesses to its negotiation.[100] There were probably many more Métis petitioners present throughout the negotiation, making a political statement, if by presence alone. Although government made no promises to Métis during the negotiations, the negotiating Chiefs asked that government treat their Half-breed brothers fairly and justly, and that they allow the Métis to continue to hunt in the west.[101]

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[98] Devine, *Own Themselves*, 144-145. Devine does not indicate which of Antoine's daughters took treaty with their husbands. But, Francoise Desjarlais did note in her scrip application that she withdrew from treaty in 1882. It is unclear when, or the circumstances under which she took treaty because her husband Simon Blondeau, nor any of their children took treaty. Simon was however one of the signatories to the Métis petition to enter Treaty 4.

[99] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[100] Morris, *Treaties of Canada,* 330-338. For an examination of the role of Métis as treaty interpreters, See: Allyson Stevenson, "The Métis Cultural Brokers and the Western Numbered Treaties, 1869-1877" (Master of Arts thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 2004).

[101] Lieutenant Governor Morris to the Secretary of State, Special Appendix B, 17 October 1874, Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for the year 1875, Vol. 7, No. 9, *Canadian Sessional Papers*, 1876, xix-xxii.

The Métis used what influence they could muster by calling upon one of their own, Pascal Breland to deliver their petition to the Lieutenant Governor. An old buffalo hunter turned political statesmen, the petitioners believed he could, and would champion their cause. A prominent trader and farmer from White Horse Plains, Breland was a Magistrate for St. Francois Xavier in the early 1850s and by 1857 served on the North-West Council. In 1872, the Canadian Government sent Breland to the Qu'Appelle region in advance of treaty to counsel Cree and Saulteaux Chiefs, distribute gifts and make assurances. Most importantly he was to report back to government on the existing conditions.[102] Familiar to First Nations and Métis in the region, Breland was a trusted and fitting candidate for this position. He and his wife Marie Grant, daughter of Cuthbert Grant and Madeleine Desmarais had kinship connections to the Qu'Appelle Métis and wintered in the Valley in 1868-69 along with Solomon Hamelin's family. Cuthbert Grant had two children, James and Julie, by his wife Marie McGillis that were married into the Qu'Appelle families. Through these marriages, particularly through that of Julie Grant and Baptiste Desjarlais, the Grants and Brelands had extended kinship connections to the large extended Desjarlais, Fisher and Blondeau families in the Valley, many of whom had also signed on the 11 September 1874 petition.

Like the 1873 petition sent by John Fisher and others, this petition echoed requests for the Government to protect Métis lands and livelihoods. There were three main requests in this petition. First, they asked for protections over their way of life. They solicited the Government to recognize their rights to the lands they occupied and those that they may take along the Qu'Appelle River. They asked for recognition of the right to fish in the Qu'Appelle, hunt freely on the prairies west and south-west of the Qu'Appelle Lakes, as well as the right to trade at the lakes and in the Qu'Appelle region. Understanding local First Nations and Government were undergoing treaty negotiation, the petitioners requested the right to hunt without interference from First Nations, and agreed that they would do so upholding any regulations that First Nations might make

[102] Margaret F. Sanche, "Pascal Breland," Dictionary *of Canadian Biography*. www.biographi.ca/en/bio/breland_pascal_12E.htm.

together with the Métis or Government.[103] The petitioners don't specifically reference the treaty process, but their statement demonstrates their recognition of shared rights and access to the territory. Second, petitioners asked that the Roman Catholic Church have "free and tranquil enjoyment of its possessions and participate in all the privileges and rights of the half-breeds."[104] Seeking protections for the lands occupied by the Church is indicative of the devout nature of the Métis and the important role the Church played in their lives. Third, they appealed to the Government to pass laws protecting the buffalo hunt. They were worried about the declining herds moving further from the Valley region. Concerned for their economic livelihood, they asked the Government to make laws preventing hunters from wintering too far out in the prairies. Once a strategy to ensure continued access to the herds, wintering was now understood to be detrimental to the diminishing herds. Wintering close to the herds increased access, but it also invited the possibility that hunters might overhunt. As an additional protection of the hunt, the petitioners requested the Government compel hunters to all "start together for the chase."[105] Hunting together was a distinctive feature of the hunt, specific to the Métis. The Métis codified the importance of embarking on the hunt in unison in the practical laws governing the hunt. Maintaining these tenets ensured order, regulated behavior and encouraged collective success. Requesting the Government regulate directives so integral to the Métis hunt reveals the considerable impact the thinning herds had on Métis social and economic structures.

The September 1874 petition was a declaration of Métis sovereignty and an assertion of their rights, use and occupancy of the Valley. They were aware of the changing economic, social and political milieu they lived within. The Métis competed for fewer resources at a time when treaties restricted First Nations land occupancy and government policy opened land for incoming settlers. In this shifting landscape, the

[103] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[104] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[105] Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle to Alexander Morris, Lieutenant- Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 11 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

"Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle" wanted assurances they would be able to maintain their livelihood, petitioning for the right to hunt, fish and trade in the Valley region, as well as recognition of their rights to their plots of land they occupied along the Qu'Appelle Lakes and River.

Morris' response to this petition, like the previous one, disregarded any rights-based claim on the part of the Métis. He did agree to present the petition to the Privy Council of Canada, communicate their wishes to the Minister of the Interior, and submit their request for laws regarding the buffalo hunt to the North-West Council, but there was no assurance of protection of Métis lands due to their rights as Métis. Instead, Morris responded that the Government would respect their property rights as with any other landholders, because "it has always been the custom to regard the rights of the actual possessors of lands." The message was clear. Government would only guarantee the Métis property rights as any other landholder, and not specific land rights based on their status as Métis. Morris' response regarding future lands for the Métis was similar. Having just completed the treaty process, Morris declared that the Government would only deal with those under treaty, not the Métis.[106] They would continue to treat the Métis as any other settler. Government priority was to relocate First Nations to reserve lands and then open the remaining unoccupied land for settlement, not deal with the special claims of 'the Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle."

As promised, Morris apprised the Privy Council Office and the Minister of the Interior, David Laird, of the Métis position in October 1874. Morris stressed that the Métis' request for protection of the lands they and the Church occupied was not unreasonable. However, he was confident that the Métis were now "happily allayed." He had reassured the Métis of their property rights as landowners and had dissuaded any feeling of uneasiness or dissatisfaction amongst them.[107]

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[106] Lieutenant Governor Alexander Morris to Augustin Brabant, Baptiste Davis, and others, half-breeds of the Lakes Qu'Appelle and environs, 16 September 1874, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[107] Alexander Morris to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, 17 October 1874. Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

Morris, however, misjudged his settlement of Métis claims. At the Qu'Appelle Mission, Father DeCorby was aware of the increasing anxiety and unease amongst the Métis. Also looking out for the interests of the Church, DeCorby lobbied the Minister of the Interior on behalf of the Métis. In October 1874 he wrote to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, asking he be able to share this knowledge and experience of the Qu'Appelle Métis so that Government might treat the Métis with "justice and generosity."[108] DeCorby was unsure of exactly when the Métis came to winter in the Valley, but that they were already wintering there when Lord Tache visited the Qu'Appelle Lakes in 1865. DeCorby noted, that Lord Tache had travelled to the Qu'Appelle Lakes, upon request of the Métis wintering there to establish the Mission. Once assured of the establishment of the Mission, the Métis promised to respect the land reserved by the Church and began to take up their own plots of land along the lakes and the river. He requested the Government honor the Métis' claims to plots of land as they took them, and that the Government not hold them strictly to the lines imposed by the looming grid survey. He believed this a reasonable request due to the nature of the Valley environment. If the Métis were to be bound to the grid survey system, families would have no access to the necessary resources found on the irregularly shaped plots they currently claimed. According to DeCorby,

> this may appear exorbitant to those who have no knowledge of the place, but to those who have seen it there is nothing but what is reasonable. Good land is scarce – wood still rarer – particularly serviceable wood. Consequently, if they draw lines the same as has been done in other places, it will happen that the lines, which will certainly not bend according to the caprices of the streams, nor the shapes of the points, will cut off, or take them from, the little good land or wood of any value which made them choose the place, and which are indispensable for their maintenance. They will thus have to establish themselves in other places, because the lines will not leave them enough to live upon.[109]

Two months later, DeCorby received notice from the Deputy Minister that the Minister of the Interior's Office had received his letter, but they took no action.

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[108] Father DeCorby to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, 1 October 1874, File HB 61, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171, Half Breed Files, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[109] Father DeCorby to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, 1 October 1874, File HB 61. RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171. Half Breed Files, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

In his appeal, DeCorby acknowledged that he believed the Métis had specific rights based on their occupancy and their sovereignty over territory. This was due, in part to the role he believed the Métis played in encouraging peace with local First Nations. DeCorby noted that the Métis

> had right to some privileges in this place. It was they who made a kind of conquest of it, by obliging the Indian nations who formerly warred there to retire. It is they who still keep them off, and it is to their presence that is due the honor of peace, and the security which is enjoyed all around.[110]

DeCorby's assertion that the Métis made a form of conquest over First Nations land and their continued role in maintaining peace in the region reveals that Métis settlement, land rights and occupancy were less clear-cut then their petitions expressed them to be. The act of petitioning demonstrated their desire for Métis voices to be heard whereas the inclusion of diplomatic language regarding the extension of kinship relationships to First Nations exposes their apprehension of their place in a three-way race where parties competed for the same land and resources.

The Qu'Appelle petitions, important in making demands for the recognition of Métis rights in the Valley region, were part of a larger political movement of Métis resistance. During this period, Métis from settlements across the west petitioned Government, seeking recognition of their rights and protections over their way of life, including inclusion in the Treaty process, protections and regulations over the buffalo hunt and support in taking up agriculture.[111] In early September 1876, 30 Métis at Fort Walsh submitted a petition requesting admission to Treaty Four to Inspector James Morrow Walsh of the North-West Mounted Police to join Treaty Four.[112] They recognized Walsh as an agent of the Canadian Government, acting on behalf of the

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[110] Father DeCorby to David Laird, Minister of the Interior, 1 October 1874, File HB 61. RG 15, D-II-3, Vol. 171. Half Breed Files, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[111] See: Appendix A for a list of Métis petitions signed by Qu'Appelle Métis

[112] Half Breeds at Fort Walsh to Inspector James Morrow Walsh, Petition, 6 September 1876, File 7089, Vol. 3637, RG 10, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada. Petition signatories: Louis Militaire (sic), Joseph Parisien, Alex Gariepy, Francois Lafontaine, Jeremie Eden (sic), Joseph Lemire, John Wells, Daniel Ledoux, Joseph Amiot, Peter Leveille, Joseph Ducharme, Alex Gardy, Pierre Ellery, Joseph Amiot, Francois Amiot Jr., Louis Amiot, Baptiste Belgarde, Gilbert Belgarde, …. Amelin, Jean Charet, Xavier Fion, Louis De Coteau Sr., Louison DeCoteau, Humphrey Favel, Louis Leveille, Moise Adam, Alexis Pelltier, Baptiste Pelltier, Bonaventure Gariepy, Baptiste Larocque

Superintendent General of Indian Affairs. The petition asked Government to relinquish Manitoba scrip claims the Métis had not yet received and admit them into treaty. They clearly identified as half-breeds of the Cree and Saulteaux tribes, arguing they had lived on the plains all their lives and "adopted the customs of the Indians." Several of the signatories, including Joseph Parisien, Joseph Amiot, Francois Amiot Jr., Baptiste Larocque, Joseph Lemire were also signatories on petitions from the Qu'Appelle region. They requested receiving the same annuities as other treaty bands, and recognizing their own kinship relationships and rights as Métis, they asked to elect their own Chief.[113] This petition should not have come as a surprise to Walsh. Only days earlier, the Cree chiefs assembled at Fort Walsh to receive their treaty annuities requested Walsh's presence at their encampment. Supportive of the Métis request, the Cree chiefs demanded Government admit the Métis into treaty and provide them benefits equal to what they received. Walsh responded sympathetically. Government would not allow Métis to enter Treaty without the approval of the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. He explained that the Métis had received a grant of land in Manitoba and cautioned that if the Métis were to enter Treaty, they might receive both treaty annuity and scrip. In conciliation he reasoned that if there were Métis who wished to give up their scrip claims and "be like the Indians with the same laws governing both" he would forward their individual requests to Indian Affairs for consideration. Walsh forwarded the petition to the Minister of the Interior and reported on his meeting with the Cree chiefs. The Cree chiefs, he noted, regarded the Métis "as their brothers of the plains, and were not inclined to part company with them now."[114]

At Qu'Appelle less than a month later, a large group of Métis presented themselves to Government representatives when paying annuities to the Cree.[115] Asking that Government include them in Treaty, many were individuals that petitioned Lieutenant Governor Morris during Treaty Four signing in 1874. Questioned if they

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[113] Half Breeds at Fort Walsh to Inspector James Morrow Walsh, Petition, 6 September 1876, File 7089, Vol. 3637, RG 10, Indian Affairs Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[114] J.M.Walsh, Special Appendix D, Report of Mr. J.M. Walsh, respecting the payment by him of Annuities under Treaty No. 4, to Indians at Cypress Hills, 12 September, 1876, Vol 7. No 11, *Canada Sessional Papers,* 1877.
[115] M.G. Dickieson to the Honorarble Minister of the Interior, Special Appendix C, 7 October, 1876. Vol. 7, No. 11. *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1877.

belonged to any particular Band or recognized a particular Chief, the Métis replied as they had at Fort Walsh. They wished to enter treaty as their own band, distinct from other Bands, with a Chief they elected. They prioritized recognition of their rights as Métis, sought inclusion in Treaty on their own terms, and were pragmatic in their need to secure the means to support themselves and their families. Finding that the Department of the Interior's representative, M.G. Dickieson, would not accede to their demands, some presented themselves not as Métis, but as members of the First Nations Bands present. Dickieson refused payment to all those not already on the Treaty paylists unless they willingly took an oath that their fathers were or had been First Nations. The Métis present refused to do so. Dickieson made a risky decision in presenting this caveat to the Métis. Treaty paylists could have grown substantially had the Métis accepted and sworn this oath. Dickieson's knowledge that the Métis present had previously petitioned Lieutenant Governor Morris at the signing of Treaty Four may have influenced his decision.

Dickieson's refusal to allow the Métis into treaty pleased the Treaty Four chiefs present. Unlike those at Fort Walsh, they did not wish to have the Métis admitted into their Bands. Dickieson noted that they were so anxious about it that they implored Mr. McDonald, HBC Officer in Charge of the Swan River District, to act on their behalf in persuading Dickieson to prevent the Métis' entry. McDonald refused the Chiefs' requests to influence Dickieson, wishing not to interfere. McDonald did however, according to Dickieson, work to persuade the Métis not to press the issue further.[116]

Qu'Appelle Métis saw it necessary to reaffirm kinship relationships with local First Nations in their petitions, using language of brothers to liken themselves to their First Nations relatives. At the same time, First Nations leaders acknowledged familial relationships to the Métis in their treaty speeches and meetings with Government. In some instances, their desires aligned with the Métis, asking that Government not forget about their relatives, while in other instances, they eagerly wanted the Métis excluded from treaty benefits. Using the language of kinship demonstrated that First Nations and Métis recognized a bond between the two. Yet, there were clear distinctions between

[116] M.G. Dickieson to the Honorarble Minister of the Interior, Special Appendix C, 7 October, 1876. Vol. 7, No. 11. *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1877.

First Nations and Métis for the Government in recognizing and negotiating land rights. As a result, access to land and resources was complicated and even hotly contested between First Nations, Métis and incoming Anglo-Canadian settlers.

For the Qu'Appelle families, admittance into Treaty Four could have provided some economic security and would have recognized their rights as Métis. Similarly, entering treaty as their own Band would have allowed Qu'Appelle families to maintain kinship relationships and obligations with one another. The request to join treaty, however, was just one potential solution to the situation and when refused, only strengthened their resolve to protect their economic livelihood and way of life.

In other parts of the North-West, Métis took similar political action, submitting petitions to the Government to redress grievances and protect their rights. Seeking protection over their economic livelihood, the Métis at Blackfoot Crossing on the Bow River petitioned the Government in 1877, asking, like the Qu'Appelle families, for assistance in transitioning to an agricultural economy. They asked for a relaxation in game laws so that they might continue to hunt during the transition period. In 1878, approximately 280 Métis, including not only those from the Qu'Appelle Valley and Cypress Hills region, but also from La Prairie Ronde, Wood Mountain, Willow Bunch, and Montana petitioned the Government for protection and regulation of the hunt.[117] Concerned about their economic future, the signatories were families that had regularly wintered together in the Cypress Hills and saw themselves as a collective, with an ever-increasing sense of nationhood. Petitioning was a claim of sovereignty over a large hunting territory that encompassed most of the western plains, including the Qu'Appelle Valley.[118] In this petition they asked for a re-opening of the buffalo hunt between November 14 and February 15 of each year, as well as a grant of land for the Métis. They asked for a strip of land about 150 miles long and 50 miles wide along the United States and Canadian border, beginning where the Pembina River crossed the border.

In 1877, the North-West Council passed an Ordinance for the Protection of the Buffalo. The Ordinance set out what animals could be hunted, how and when. It

[117] Approximately 100 of the 280 signatories could be linked to those in the Qu'Appelle Valley.
[118] Half Breeds living in the vicinity of Cypress Hills to the Members of the Privy Council of the North-West Territories, Petition, 2 August 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

regulated a closed season for hunting female buffalo from November 15 to August 14th each year, but made provisions allowing First Nations hunting between November 15 and February 14th. Historian Bill Waiser argues that the short-lived ordinance, aimed at safeguarding the dwindling buffalo numbers, did little but upset the very people asking for protection over their livelihoods.[119] Concern for buffalo numbers and continued subsistence practices dominated treaty negotiations in the North-West. The Canadian Government initially supported First Nations leaders' desire for protection over the remaining herds and they saw conservation as a means to continue feeding First Nations Peoples as they moved onto reserves and transitioned to agriculture. First Nations leaders opposed the Ordinance as they initially asked that hunting be controlled for their continued benefit, not that their subsistence practices be so heavily regulated. Likewise, Métis also saw this regulation of the hunt as an affront to their economic livelihood, contesting the Ordinance and this provision in their petitions from Cypress Hills and Blackfoot Crossing. Although scholars have cited these oppositions as motivation for the Ordinance's repeal, Waiser argues that the reasons were more complicated than meeting the demands of Indigenous hunters.

In addition to these petitions, similar appeals asking for land surveys, agricultural implements and seed grain also came from Métis settlements at Prince Albert, St. Albert, Battleford and from the South Branch settlements of St. Laurent, St. Antoine de Padou and St. Louis de Langevin throughout the late 1870s and into the 1880s.[120] Like the

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[119] Bill Waiser, "A Legislator's View of Bison Collapse: The 1877 North-West territories Bison Protection Ordinance," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, eds. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016), 245-262.

[120] Métis Blackfoot Crossing to David Laird, Lieutenant Governor, Petition, 19 September 1877, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers* 1885.; Settlers and Residents at Prince Albert to the Minister of the Interior, Petition, 15 January 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers* 1885.; Half-breeds of St. Albert to David Laird, Lieutenant Governor, Petition, 1 February 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers* 1885.; Half-breeds of St. Laurent to David Laird, Lieutenant Governor, Petition, 1 February 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; Old Settlers at Prince Albert to the Minister of the Interior, Petition, May 1878, *Canada Sessional Papers* 1885.; Half Breeds living in the vicinity of Cypress Hills to the Members of the Privy Council of the North-West Territories, Petition, 2 August 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; Half Breeds of Edmonton to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Petition, 19 May 1880, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West

Qu'Appelle petitions, the Government ignored them, until forced by Louis Riel and his supporters to pay attention to the Métis' claims.

Conclusion

By the early 1880s many Métis had already taken up plots of land in the Valley region. In the same way that wintering over on the prairies had been an environmental adaption for the Métis, the shift toward year-round occupation of land along the Qu'Appelle Lakes was a response to changing resource availability with the decline of the buffalo. It was also an effort to maintain a Métis worldview that privileged kinship relationships and a mixed subsistence lifestyle premised on hunting, fishing, gathering and small-scale agricultural production. Although most Métis families engaged in gardening on their small river lots, there were some with the financial means, such as Antoine Larocque, Hilaire Boucher and Alex Fisher who farmed on a larger scale. Regardless of wealth, in organizing themselves in the Valley families looked to familiar land tenure practices that would ensure the maintenance of kinship relationships central to the Métis way of life.

In the 1870s, the Qu'Appelle Métis made attempts to have their voices heard and rights recognized. When faced with incoming settlement pressure and economic changes, and motivated by Government inaction and refusal to defend Métis rights and grievances, petitioning was not only a means of community action, but also a demonstration of Métis occupancy of the Qu'Appelle Valley as their homeland. The Métis understood the context in which they lived and the changes coming with the decline of the buffalo, treaty negotiation, impending survey and incoming settlement. Métis sought protection over their livelihoods and the right to maintain familiar land tenure practices. These practices placed families in proximity to one another, allowing them to engage in small-scale

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Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; Métis of St. Antoine de Padou to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Petition, 4 September 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; Métis of St. Louis de Langevin to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Petition, 19 November 1883, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

agriculture and a subsistence lifestyle while relying on kinship relationships for mutual aid and support.

Qu'Appelle Métis feared encroachment on their lands. Aware of the treatment and experience of Métis in Manitoba, they demanded to have their rights recognized and sought protections over private property and collective hunting territory that would allow them to maintain their way of life. They insisted on making their voices heard and utilized the means available to them. Astutely, they petitioned multiple agents within the Dominion Government and took advantage of opportunities presented to them, eager to have their petitions forwarded to those in positions of authority. Qu'Appelle Métis understood their changing situation and pursued ways to be successful in adjusting, while also safeguarding a way of life that privileged their worldview

Chapter Six: Conflicting Land Tenure: Protecting a Métis Worldview

Governor General Lorne Petition, 1881

In 1881, seven years after the previous petition, Qu'Appelle Métis again began petitioning the Government. This time they took advantage of the Governor General, the Marquis of Lorne's cross-country tour of the new dominion. When he and his party reached the Qu'Appelle Lakes in August 1881, a party of nearly 100 mounted Métis met them. In a showy display of horsemanship and collective identity, the Métis welcomed the Government party to their territory. According to Norbert Welsh, the old buffalo hunters now settled in the Qu'Appelle Valley mounted their fastest buffalo runners and positioned themselves at the top of the south side of the Valley. As the Governor General's party approached, the mounted riders lined each side of the trail in an honour guard and when the party halted, the Métis proceeded to fire a salute into the air. Moved by the display of hospitality, the Governor General dismounted and shook hands, greeting each of the Métis. The Métis mounted again, fired another salute, and then on prancing and galloping horses, escorted the party into Lebret.[1]

Following on the heels of this visit, the Métis submitted a petition to the Governor General seeking recognition of their rights and protections over the lands they occupied. On 2 September 1881, 113 heads of Métis families petitioned as "the Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle."[2] Arguing that Government had treated them unjustly because having been temporarily absent from Manitoba in 1870 at the time the province entered Confederation, they did not receive scrip. Asking for similar treatment to Manitoba Métis, they requested scrip for heads of families and grants of land to their children. No longer arguing that Manitoba Métis had been poorly treated, as they did in previous petitions, the Métis now wanted compensation like that which their relatives in Manitoba had received. They asked for a survey of their plots of land, reminding the Governor General of the promise made by Government at the time of Treaty Four in 1874 that they

[1] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 130-131.
[2] Pierre LaPierre, Simon Blondin, John Fisher, Alexander Fisher, John Simpson, Xavier Desnomme and others, the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle Settlement to the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada, Petition, 2 September, 1881, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

would recognize and respect Métis land rights. The survey they requested was a long lot survey of private land,

> to be made of their present holdings, similar to the old settlers' claims on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, in the Province of Manitoba, allotting to each actual settler a certain number of chains footage fronting on the lakes or rivers, as the case may happen, throughout their settlement, and running two miles back, north or south, as the case may be, with the privilege of two miles additional for hay and wood purposes.[3]

Lastly, they drew attention to the "very destitute condition and helpless state" they found themselves in due to the general decline of the buffalo and the movement of remaining herds beyond the international boundary. Deprived of the economic means to support themselves, they pleaded that they could make their livelihood through agriculture, but were without the financial means to do so. To support this shift toward agricultural production they asked for assistance with farm implements and seed grain. They also asked that any survey maintain the familiar river lot land holding system practiced in the Qu'Appelle Valley, that placed families and relatives in proximity to one another, rather than conform to the grid township system the Dominion Lands Survey would soon impose.

Thoughts of the future were never far from the minds of the Qu'Appelle Métis. A shift toward agriculture and away from buffalo hunting required the Métis maintain occupancy of the lands they already held, but also that they secure lands for their growing families. Analysis of the 1881 petition signatories indicates that most of these 59 signatories were heads of families, occupying their own plots of land, and the remainder were their adult and minor children. Some who signed the petition were as young as nine or ten, obviously living in their parent's households. The young age of these signatories reveals that these families were thinking strategically about their children's future, advocating for and protecting their own rights, but also those of their sons in anticipation of them taking up land. For instance, Antoine Larocque signed on the 1881 petition as did three of his sons living within his household: Antoine Junior, age 18, Alex, 15 and

[3] Pierre LaPierre, Simon Blondin, John Fisher, Alexander Fisher, John Simpson, Xavier Desnomme and others, the half-breeds of Qu'Appelle Settlement to the Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada, Petition, 2 September, 1881, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

William, 13. Similarly, Pierre LaPierre, and his sons Thomas age 25, Joseph, 12 and Theofile, 10, were all signatories. Simon Blondeau and Francoise Desjarlais had eight sons sign the petition. Living with Simon and Francoise at the time were Napoleon 22, Ambroise 14, St. Pierre 14 and Joseph age 9. Sons, Simon Junior, 24, Louison, 26, John, 28, and, Zacharie, 30, had already taken up their own plots of land.

Clear that these families were trying to protect the rights of their male children in planning for their future, the extended family nature of these communities offered protection for women alongside their husbands. For example, in addition to Pierre LaPierre's three sons signing the petition, his son-in-law Toussaint Galarneau was also a signatory. Galarneau was married to LaPierre and Adelaide Boyer's daughter, Betsy. There was also a gendered recognition of the rights of Métis daughters, as both Thomas Kavanaugh and Thomas Kelly, neither of whom were Métis, signed on behalf of their Métis wives, Elise and Veronique Klyne. The daughters of Madeleine Beauchemin and Michel Klyne, Elise and Veronique's brothers Theofile 25, Michel 41, and Andre 42 signed the petition, as did their brother-in-law Thomas Desjarlais, spouse of their sister Madeleine. In signing the petition, both Kavanaugh and Kelly indicated they signed on behalf of their wives, indicating that while not Métis, they were well integrated into the large Klyne extended family.

Although the Métis were unsuccessful in petitioning the Governor General, their request for agricultural assistance demonstrated a considerable change in position from seven years earlier. No longer were Qu'Appelle Métis asking for rights to broad access to hunting grounds west and southwest of the Valley. Rather they asked for assistance in adjusting to the new agricultural order that would soon be ubiquitous across the prairies. The Métis' new position was perhaps a compromise made in recognition of changing times and the end of the buffalo hunt. More in line with the language of treaties and upcoming settlement, this latest request was much closer to what the Government seemed to support.

Only one month later, the Dominion Lands Survey began its work in the Valley region, denying the Métis request and surveying the land according to the grid township system, not according to Métis land tenure practices. Qu'Appelle Métis continued to petition for recognition of their rights and protection of their pre-existing land claims

despite their grievances falling on deaf ears. They attempted to negotiate a position allowing them to maintain their land tenure practices within a changing social and political order. Métis landowners however, not only found their properties arbitrarily divided up by invisible survey lines, but increasingly immersed in a foreign administrative and bureaucratic process which challenged their rights and conflicted with their land tenure practices.

Dominion Lands Act and Survey

The opening of the prairie west for agricultural settlement in the late nineteenth century has been a key feature of the Canadian national narrative. Historian Doug Owram argues that by the late nineteenth century, the North-West was increasingly perceived as a frontier of great agricultural importance and a fertile garden to be settled.[4] To achieve this end, it was necessary to convert the region's potential as an agricultural "garden of Eden" into a reality. The Dominion Lands Act, 1872 affirmed Canadian sovereignty in the west and opened land up for orderly and rapid settlement.[5] The Act set out a codified process for granting land to individual settlers, land colonization companies, railways and the Hudson's Bay Company.[6] It also set aside land for First Nations reserves and in later amendments, the distribution of Métis scrip. A key feature of the Act was that it laid out the foundation for homestead policy, which served as a blueprint to entrench individual land ownership and settlement processes including eligibility criteria and homesteader responsibility. The policies of land survey and homestead, in addition to the provision of Métis scrip, provided little benefit to the Métis.

Scholars have long recognized the influence of the United States Homestead Act, 1862 on Canadian land and homestead policy.[7] Chester Martin argues that in creating a

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[4] Owram, *Promise of Eden.*
[5] For detailed account of the Dominion Lands Act see: Chester Martin, *'Dominion Lands' Policy*, ed. Lewis H. Thomas (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973.: Kirk N. Lambrecht, *The Administration of Dominion Lands, 1870-1930* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1991).
[6] Dominion Lands Act, 1872
[7] Martin, *Dominion Lands.; Lambrecht, Administration of Dominion Lands.;* R.B. McKercher and B. Wolfe, *Understanding Western Canada's Dominion Land Survey System* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1986): 1-11.; John Eagle, *The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Development of Western Canada* (Kingston-Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).; John L. Tyman, "Patterns of Western Land Settlement," *Transactions of the Manitoba Historical Society,* Series 3, No. 28 (1971-72). http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/landsettlement.shtml.

land policy that would open the west for settlement, the Canadian Government looked to the American example because they dealt with similar issues of expansion, transportation and settlement.[8] Based on Thomas Jefferson's 1795 Northwest Ordinance, the Homestead Act, 1862 legislated Jefferson's ideas of democracy stemming from individual land ownership, free homesteads and family farms which were to be a staple of policy.[9] The American grid system, Sarah Carter argues, appealed to both Canada and the United States because it "expedited the mapping, absorption, and individual ownership of the terrain. It permitted the land to be sold, bought, and owned in the most uncomplicated and timely fashion" and created real estate developers out of both nations.[10]

According to the Canadian Dominion Lands Act, land survey followed a square township survey system (Figure 6.1).[11] Each township measured 36 square miles, divided into 36 sections. Each section measured one square mile or 640 acres. Each section comprised four quarter sections of 160 acres each. Even numbered sections in each township were available for homestead, while the railway reserved the odd-numbered sections. The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) received these sections as partial payment for completing the railway. In each township, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) reserved one and three-quarter sections, and local municipalities reserved two sections for local schools. The HBC retained a portion of land with the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada.[12] Once surveyed, the HBC could dispose the land as they wished. The lands

[8] Martin, *Dominion Lands*. See Chapter 7: The Free Homestead System: The Background in the United States. Martin however contends that the American and Canadian experience differed in relation to "squatters." In Canada, he notes, squatters "were almost negligible." The Selkirk settlers, Métis and First Nations were already present in the North-West before the extension of Canadian authority, and their rights were recognized in imperial and Canadian legislation. They were not squatters according to American policy definitions, but had recognizable rights.

[9] Carter, *Imperial Plots*, 40.

[10] Carter, *Imperial Plots*, 39.

[11] The square township survey system aligns with the lines of latitude and longitude. Township lines run east and west and range lines run north south. Townships are numbered consecutively south to north beginning with the 49th parallel or the international boundary, while Ranges are numbered east to west with the First or Principal Meridian located west of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Smaller townships are located in some ranges to compensate for the curvature of the Earth. These are generally given both an alpha and numeric label. For example, in Range 12 West of the 2nd Meridian, the township north of 18 is not 19, but 19A. Township 19A is made up of 12 sections rather than the standard 36. Township 19 is north of 19A.

[12] Sections 11 and 29 were reserved for schools and the Hudson's Bay Company received Section 8 and all of Section 26 except the north-east quarter. In every fifth township the HBC also received all of Section 26.

reserved lands by the CPR and the HBC were available for purchase and in some instances, were available for leasing.

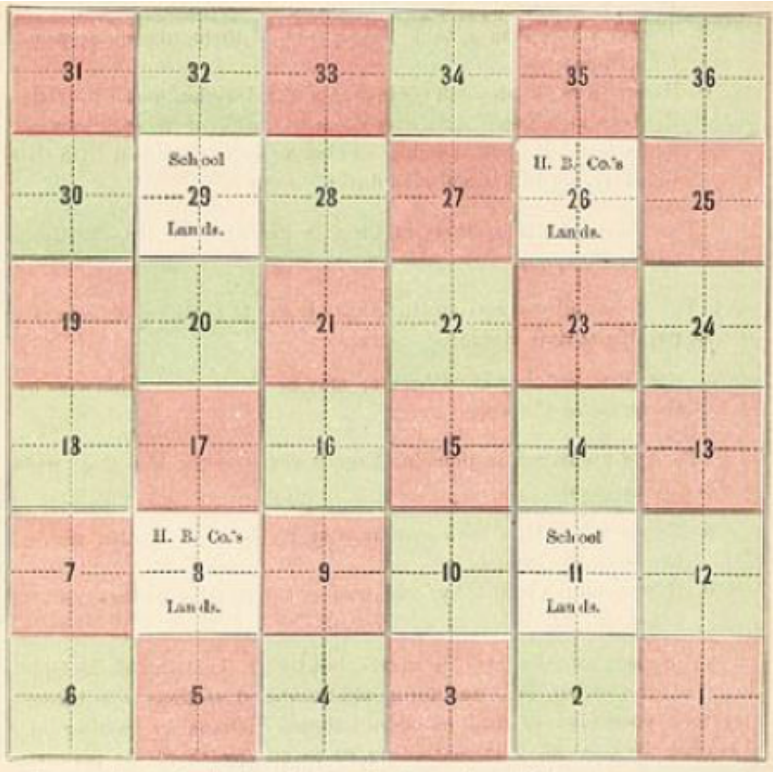

Figure 6.1: Square Township[13]

Historians John C. Lehr, John Everitt, and Simon Evans argue that land survey within the Dominion Lands Act was "mechanistic" in its mathematical precision.[14] Oblivious to topography or vegetation, the survey cut across rivers, lakes, swamps and muskeg with the same disregard that it cut through forests.[15] In the same way it bisected the landscape, it cut through individual land holdings and congregations of people settled in distinct groups for whom close contact was a necessary element of maintianing cultural and group cohesion.[16] These authors make this argument with a view to bloc

[13] "Land Grants of Western Canada," Library and Archives Canada. https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/land/land-grants-western-canada-1870-1930/Pages/land-grants-western-canada.aspx.
[14] John C. Lehr, John Everitt and Simon Evans. "Making of the Prairie Landscape," in *Immigration and Settlement, 1870-1939*, eds. Gregory P. Marchildon (Canadian Plains Research Centre: Regina 2009): 13-58.; Shannon Stunden Bower, *Wet Prairie: People, Land, and Water in Agricultural Manitoba* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).
[15] Lehr et. al. "Prairie Landscape,"; Stunden Power, *Wet Prairie.*
[16] Lehr et. al. "Prairie Landscape,"; Stunden Bower, *Wet Prairie.*

settlements of Eastern European descent, yet the same could be argued of Métis families who lived according to land tenure practices that privileged access to all available resources and living near one another for the maintenance of cultural and economic practices. Historian Sarah Carter contends, that the grid system

> obscured and ignored land use and tenure systems that were based on generations of accumulated knowledge of and sensitivity to the great variations in the landscape. The grid transformed Indigenous land into the "public domain," meaning it was no longer owned by or available to the First Nations. Surveys created resentment, anger, and resistance.[17]

Once surveyed, the Department of the Interior offered free homesteads of a quarter section or 160 acres, provided the homesteader pay a $10.00 administrative fee. In the Dominion Lands Act, 1872, any person (male or female) who was the head of a family or over age 21 could take up a homestead.[18] By 1876, the criteria changed, lowering the age of taking a homestead from 21 to 18, and including a provision that this was restricted to men. The only way women could homestead under the revised provisions was if they were the sole head of their family.[19] Indian persons under the Indian Act, 1876, were also ineligible for homestead.[20] Upon payment of the filing fee to the Land Agent, prospective homesteaders could make entry on a quarter section. Located in western cities and towns, Dominion Lands Offices, staffed with Land Agents and Homestead Inspectors, administered the process. Employees reported to the Dominion Lands Branch, created within the Department of the Interior to facilitate western settlement. After filing, homesteaders had to prove they were a *bona fide* settler before they received patent, or formal ownership of the land. Although there is no clear definition of "bona fide" in the Act, it meant individuals who, in good faith, intended to take up agriculture and farm the land. It also excluded land speculators and absentee land owners. Homesteaders had to make several necessary improvements and remain in continual residence on the property for at least six months a year during the first three years.[21] Improvements included building a home and fences and demonstrating that they

[17] Carter, *Imperial Plots*, 39.
[18] Dominion Lands Act, 1872, Cap. 23, Sec. 33.
[19] Dominion Lands Act, 1876, Cap. 23, Sec. 33.
[20] Indian Act, 1876, Cap 18, Sec. 70.
[21] If homesteaders found their land unsuitable for farming, they could file a declaration of abandonment and then take up another 160-acre quarter section.

were making annual progress in clearing and farming the land. If successful, they applied to the local Land Agent or Homestead Inspector for patent. The application process included a detailed declaration providing individual and familial information, the amount of land broken, cropped, and fenced as well as details about livestock and buildings. The process also required that two witnesses known to the homesteader make a declaration attesting to the truth of the application. If approved, a patent would be issued and the homesteader became the formal land owner. With patent to the original homestead, the owner became eligible to obtain a second adjacent quarter section to expand their farm. If not satisfied with the completion of improvements, the Homestead Inspector could deny patent forcing the homesteader to forfeit his claim. The land was then available for re-entry by someone else.[22]

A significant aspect of the Dominion Land Survey for Métis was the reservation of road allowances around each township grid. Prior to 1881, road allowances between each township and section measured 90 feet. However, in 1881, the Dominion Lands Branch reduced the width of the road allowance to one chain or sixty-six feet and eliminated two of the roads crossing each township from east to west. Together with the cart trails that existed prior to survey, these lands were set aside for public roads, which the Dominion Government transferred to the responsible territorial or provincial Government.[23]

Qu'Appelle Valley Survey

When the Dominion Land Survey of the Qu'Appelle Valley began in 1881, Surveyor T.R. Hewson found Qu'Appelle Métis settled in family clusters along the lakes and river, with a few farther removed from the water. He recorded the claims of 19 Métis

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[22] At various times under the *Dominion Lands Act* homesteaders were given the right to pre-empt the purchase a second, adjourning quarter section, for an additional ten dollar filing fee. This right was held before or in preference to any other person, but only if certain conditions could be met. The intent of this provision was to enable a settler to acquire property for the expansion of his agricultural operation, if he should be able to do so. After receiving patent on the original homestead, the homesteader had three years to purchase their pre-empted land. Pre-emptions were cancelled in 1890, but restored in 1908. In addition, between 1871 and 1918 a homesteader could purchase 160 acres within a nine-mile radius of their homestead at a price of three dollars per acre. See Martin, *Dominion Lands.;* and, Lambrecht, *Administration.*

[23] Lambrecht, *Administration,* 12-13.

families living in Township 21 in Ranges 13 and 14 West of the Second Meridian on the north side of the Qu'Appelle Lakes (Figure 6.2).[24] These Métis had taken up small-scale agriculture combined with the maintenance a subsistence lifestyle. Each had made improvements to their properties and were farming small plots (Table 6.1). In many cases, Hewson was unable to take their declarations because claimants were away from home, presumably hunting, fishing or freighting when surveyed.[25] In response, Hewson listed the claimant's names, claim size and the nature and value of any improvements. Many had received scrip in Manitoba and in several cases, five or six individuals were occupying the same quarter section, particularly those that fronted the water.[26] Most of these were small claims from one to eight acres, with six individuals having more than 10 acres broken.[27] In many cases, each of these claims were comprised of more than one small plot of land. For instance, George Fisher, Mr. Isbister, Peter LaPierre, Joseph LaPierre, Antoine Larocque, Alexander Petit Didier and Norbert Welsh each had two parcels of land, and John Simpson had six small plots. Having more than one parcel of land however, did not guarantee a large acreage broken. Of those with more than one parcel of land, four had fewer than two acres broken. Even John Simpson, who had six small plots broken had fewer than 8 acres broken. Of the 19 individuals Hewson documented, the largest land owners were Antoine Larocque, St. Pierre Poitras, Joseph Poitras and Norbert Welsh. Of these, Welsh was the largest landowner with almost 29 acres broken.

[24] T.R. Hewson, Dominion Land Surveyor to the Minister of the Interior, Report on the Survey of Claims, May 1881, Survey Files. No. 226, Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[25] T.R. Hewson to the Minister of the Interior, Report on Settlers, June 21, 1881, I.226, T.R. Hewson, Surveyor Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[26] T.R. Hewson to the Minister of the Interior, Report on Settlers, June 21, 1881, I.226, T.R. Hewson, Surveyor Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[27] The largest claims included those of Norbert Welsh with 28.9 acres broken; Antoine Larocque with 26.99 acres broken; St. Pierre Poitras with 26.14 acres; Joseph Poitras with 26 acres; George Fisher with 15.7 acres; and, Peter LaPierre with 10.22 acres broken.

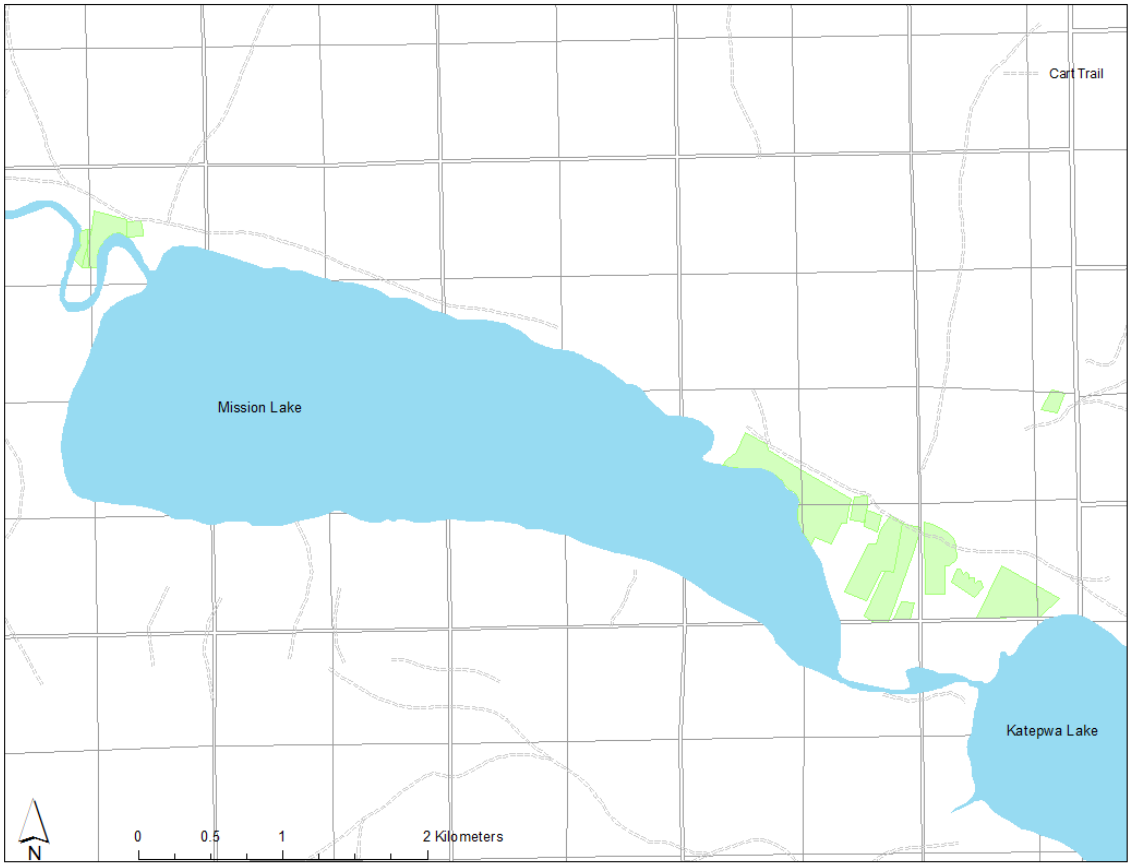

Figure 6.2: Métis improvements (Twp 21-R13-W2), T.R. Hewson survey, June 1881

Acres Broken	No. of Individuals
>2	4
2 to 4	5
5 to 9	4
10 to 20	2
20+	4

Table 6.1: Broken Acres, Hewson Survey

In the following two years Dominion Land Surveyors surveyed the remainder of the Valley region. They recorded the claims of 36 Métis in six separate townships, including 11 claims in the townships surveyed by Hewson (Table 6.2).[28] With few exceptions, families concentrated in townships 19 Ranges 11 and 12, Township 20

[28] Half-breed settlers in Qu'Appelle Valley, that surveyors took evidence as to Right and Settlement in 1882 and 1883, Memorandum, 6 June 1885, File HB 188, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol 172, Half Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

Ranges 12 and 13, and Township 21 Ranges 13 and 14.[29] Surveyors documented 128 separate claims, 36 of which were Métis. Comparison of these claims with improvements recorded on township survey maps reveals that more Métis claims existed than surveyors initially recorded. Sometimes the Surveyor General used a single surveyor's record to create the map. For instance, the map for Township 19 Range 11 replicated the field notes and draft maps of surveyor John Bourgious in the summer of 1882.[30] In other instances, they used multiple surveyor's records over a period of a few years' time. This was the case with the map of Township 21 Range 13. It is a composite created from the records of surveyors Clementi and Hewson in 1881, W.T. Thompson in 1881, J.F. Garden in 1881, C.C. DuBerger in 1885, J. Lestock Reid in 1886, and Samuel Brodie in 1886.[31] These maps indicated existing claims and improvements, often with the name of the claimant labeled. Comparing these maps with the claims reported by surveyors reveals a different picture than what they initially recorded. In four townships, Townships 19 Range 11, Township 19 Range 12, Township 20 Range 12 and Township 20 Range 13, surveyors sketched and labeled 33 claims as belonging to Métis individuals. This was five more than the 27 they recorded in their report. In the remaining two townships, Township 21 Range 13 and Township 21 Range 14 we must rely on Hewson's reported

[29] Township Survey Maps, 10 May 1883, Township 19, Range 11, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Township Survey Maps, April 1883, Township 19, Range 12, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Township Survey Maps, August 1883, Township 20, Range 12, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Township Survey Maps, October 1889, Township 20, Range 13, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Township Survey Maps, May 1893, Township 21, Range 13, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Township Survey Maps, 23 November 1887, Township 21, Range 14, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[30] Township Survey Map, May 10, 1883, Township 19, Range 11, West of the Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey Map, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Other versions of these maps are sometimes available at other archives, but these the versions held in the Saskatoon office of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[31] Township Survey Map, 15 May, 1893, Township 21, Range 13, West of Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey Map, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Compiled from surveys by: Clementi and Hewson, 1881; C.C. DuBerger 1885; W.T. Thompson 1881; J. Lestock Reid 1886; Samuel Brodie 1886; J.F. Garden 1881.; Township Survey Maps, 30 October 1889, Township 20, Range 13, West of Second Meridian. Dominion Lands Survey Map, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Compiled from surveys by Paul T.C. Dumais 1882; J.LS. Michaud 1882; Tom Kains 1881; W.T. Thompson 1881.; Township Survey Maps, 23 November 1887, Township 21, Range 14, West of Second Meridian, Dominion Lands Survey Map, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Compiled from surveys by: Clementi and Hewson 1881; T.D. Green 1886.

19 Métis claims. Available township survey maps sketch the size and location of claims, but do not label them. There is no way to decipher which were Métis claims and which were not. Using the number reported by Hewson and those identified on the four other survey maps reveals that the number of Métis claims was at least 52, many more than the 36 reported. Reasons for the discrepancy are unknown but other versions of these Township Survey Maps do exist. Following survey, Dominion Lands policy required that claimants register their pre-existing claims so that they received patent to their lands. When Métis registered their claims, the number of claimants far exceeded 52.

Year of Survey	Twp	Total Claimants	Métis Claims reported	Métis Claims Documented by Hewson	Métis Claims Documented on Twp Survey Maps
1882	Twp 19 R 11	34	2		3
1882	Twp 19 R 12	31	11		14
1882	Twp 20 R 12	33	7		6
1882	Twp 20 R 13	19	7		10
1881/1882	Twp 21 R 13	9	7	15	0
1881	Twp 21 R 14	2	2	4	0
		128	**36**	**19**	**33**

Table 6.2: Métis claims documented by Dominion Land Surveyors, 1881-1882

In Summer 1882, a Dominion Lands Office opened in Fort Qu'Appelle, staffed with a Lands Agent. He was responsible for recording and adjusting homestead claims and he was responsible to notifying those with pre-existing claims to come forward and enter their claims. At the direction of the Dominion Lands Office, surveyors were to make returns on all improvements and take evidence of any existing claims they encountered during their work.[32] As an encouragement, they received an additional 50 cents pay for each claim affidavit or declaration they took.[33] Although they had the

[32] Half-breed settlers in Qu'Appelle Valley, that surveyors took evidence as to Rights and Settlement in 1882 and 1883, Memorandum, 6 June 1885, File HB 188, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol 172, Half Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[33] Half-breed settlers in Qu'Appelle Valley, that surveyors took evidence as to Rights and Settlement in 1882 and 1883, Memorandum, 6 June 1885, File HB 188, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol 172, Half Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

responsibility of recording pre-existing claims, they had no authority to settle the many disputes that arose during survey.[34]

When documenting existing occupancy, surveyors frequently encountered claimants challenged by the imposition of survey. In some instances, surveyors were apathetic toward taking declarations because they doubted Métis intentions in taking up farming and thought little of Métis attempts at making improvements to the land. Skeptical of whether the Métis were intent on becoming *bona fide* settlers and farmers, Dominion Land Surveyor C.C. DuBerger noted that the Métis residing in small little encampments of one or two tents or a "kind of small shanty" with very little land under cultivation, "looked more like men remaining there for speculation than with the intention of cultivating."[35] This was a legitimate concern given the rampant land speculation this system engendered.[36] Annoyed at the task of having to stop his work, he complained about the number of Métis he met when surveying Township 18 Range 12. These claimants all required declarations, and "made him lose much time" in conducting his work. As a compromise, and reasoning that they did not come prepared with pen or paper to record their declarations, DuBerger deferred the claimants until he had finished his work for the day, requesting they visit his camp in the evening.[37]

Petitioning for Rights Amidst Survey, August 1882

In August 1882, amidst the continuing survey, the Half-breeds of the Qu'Appelle again petitioned Government. Addressing their petition to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, they asked that he forward their requests to the Minister of the Interior, John A. Macdonald, who they believed would treat them fairly. In all, 44 individuals signed this petition, representing approximately 25 families. [38] Like previous petitions, they

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[34] T.R. Hewson to Lindsay Russell, Surveyor General, 25 August 1881, I.226, T.R. Hewson, Surveyor Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[35] C.C. DuBerger to the Minister of the Interior, Report on Settlers, 4 December 1882, I.154, C.C. DuBerger, Surveyor Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[36] Tough, *Natural Resources*.; Augustus, "The Scrip Solution,"; Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights.*
[37] C.C. DuBerger to the Minister of the Interior, Report on Settlers, 4 December 1882, I.154, C.C. DuBerger, Surveyor Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[38] Half-breed Settlers to Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 29 August 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e. *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885. Signatories of the August 29, 1882 petition included: Joseph Blayan [Blayone]; Simon Blondeau and five of his sons, Zacharie, Jean, Louison,

pleaded for the Government to provide protection over the lands they occupied. With the recently completed and ongoing surveys, the Métis increasingly realized their fears of encroaching settlement. They anxiously awaited recognition of the land they occupied and with survey, many found themselves not only living on parcels that crossed survey lines, but also on lands allocated to land colonization companies and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR).

Land colonization companies were a mechanism used by the Canadian Government and the CPR to facilitate land sales and promote settlement. These companies purchased large blocks of land at a reduced rate on agreement that they would encourage and secure homesteaders. In 1882, twenty-six companies received charters to purchase odd-numbered sections outside the railway belt. The railway belt was the strip of land, 24 miles wide on either side of the main railway line. The odd-numbered sections of the railway belt were set aside for the CPR lands as part of their payment for constructing the railway. Colonization companies purchased this land at $2.00 per acre. If they were successful in securing homesteaders on the adjacent even-numbered sections within five years of purchase, they received a rebate of $1.00 per acre on the odd-numbered sections. Once homesteaders occupied the even-numbered sections, the odd-numbered sections increased in value and sold by the companies at higher prices. Part of the role of these colonization companies was also to accelerate construction of roads and bridges between settled and unsettled areas. Numerous colonization companies had land in southern Saskatchewan and in the Qu'Appelle Valley region including the Qu'Appelle and Long Lake Land Company and the Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Company.[39] Often

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Simon Jr. and Polllyon [Napoleon]; Gustave [Augustin] Brabant and three of his sons, Gustave [Augustin],; Alex and Edouard; Baptiste Dauphine [Dauphinais], Baptiste Desjarlais; Matthias Desjarlais; Joseph Desmarais; Antoine Fayant and two of his sons, Antoine Jr, and William; Louis Flammand and sons Andre and Maxime; Joe Gosselin, Napoleon and Antoine Amelain [Hamelin]; John A. [Andre] Klyne; Antoine La Roque [Larocque] and his son Antoine; Joseph Marion; Alphonse Martin; Kenneth McKenzie; Leon Nault; Francois Perreault and son Xavier, as well as two of Xavier's sons, Camille and Baptiste, Isadore Plante; [St.] Pierre Poitras; Baptiste Robillard , his son Chrysostome and son-in law John Simpson; Baptiste Roué [Roy]; Francois and Pierre St. Denis; and, Norbert Welsh.

[39] The Qu'Appelle and Long Lake Land Company was the companion to the Qu'Appelle, Long Lake, and Saskatchewan Railway. Company directors included Nova Scotia MP Robert Doull, Senator Thomas Gibbs, and a handful of lawyers from New Brunswick. The only local director was Thomas Wesley Jackson who was the local lawyer, advocate to the Métis and for a time, the land agent in Fort Qu'Appelle. He became a member of Parliament in 1886 and was also president of the Wood Mountain and Qu'Appelle Railway. The company was not successful in securing settlers, but focused on building transportation networks in the region. The law firm of Osler, Hammond and Nanton were also investors in the company

these colonization companies, like in the case of those in the Qu'Appelle Valley were owned and operated by Eastern bankers, lawyers, politicians, and land and scrip speculators who acted as sales agents.

The Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Company purchased land in the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1882, and began enforcing the survey lines, selling off lands occupied by the Métis and seeking to dispossess them of their claims. Refusing the Company's demands to either purchase the plots they occupied or to abandon their properties, the Métis instead petitioned Government seeking patent to their lands, arguing that they were "justly and legally entitled to the same" because of their prior occupancy. According to the petitioners, they had

> as far back as 1860 and up to 1879 settled or squatted on land situated on the banks of the Qu'Appelle River, erected comfortable dwellings and outbuildings thereon, ploughed and cultivated the soil, and, by continual residence, have complied with all the Government conditions… [They had] erected a church and school in a central position, built and opened up roads and bridges, and have made numerous improvements, which today are of great value to the new settler.[40]

Dewdney responded with a sense of urgency, immediately telegramming the Minister of the Interior apprising him that The Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Company had begun "warning off" the Métis and claiming their lands. He made recommendation to the Minister that the Land Company be notified not to interfere with the Métis holding old and existing claims in the Valley.[41] The same day he followed up the telegram with a letter to the Minister, enclosing the petition and further explaining and advising him of

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and acted as bankers, scrip dealers, brokers and sales agents for the company. E.B. Osler, was a Conservative MP from Toronto, was also the largest shareholder in the Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Company. Other directors included William Mulock, who temporarily relieved Clifford Sifton as Minister of the Interior. Like the Qu'Appelle and Long Lake Land Company, The Ontario and Qu'Appelle Company did not attract the required settlers. By 1894, they had to surrender much of their land back to the CPR. For more on land colonization companies, See: Peggy Martin-McGuire, *First Nations Land Surrenders on the Prairies, 1896-1911* (Ottawa: Indian Claims Commission, Government of Canada, 1996). http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.833886/publication.html

[40] Half-breed Settlers to Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor, North-West Territories, Petition, 29 August 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[41] Edgar Dewdney to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Telegram, 29 August 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

the situation.[42] Dewdney informed the Minister that he believed the Métis declaration to be generally accurate, viewing them as equivalent to Euro-Canadian settlers in function and in rights. The Qu'Appelle Métis were petitioning as farmers, eager to convert the prairie into farmland and protect their private property. The Métis, Dewdney stressed, were "very uneasy about their holdings" but as "the pioneers of the district" deserved fair consideration.[43] He implored the Minister to send either Commissioner Walsh or Inspector Pearce to the region to examine and equitably adjust conflicting claims.

When the Métis heard no response from their 1881 petition to the Governor General or the 1882 petition to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, Thomas Wesley Jackson began to advocate on the Métis' behalf. A local businessman and politician, Jackson was part owner in the Qu'Appelle and Long Lake Land Company and later president of the Wood Mountain and Qu'Appelle Railway Company. He was a justice of the peace and elected to the Council of the North-West Territories from 1883 to 1886, stepping down because of his involvement with the railway companies. Communicating with J. Gordon, the Dominion Lands Agent at Qu'Appelle, Jackson spoke specifically of the property occupied by the Roman Catholic Mission, St. Pierre Poitras, Norbert Welsh and Louis Flammand. Upon survey all four parties occupied the same section.[44] Each individual recognized their neighbour's claims and that of the Mission, but their allotments did not conform to the legal subdivision imposed by survey. Jackson sought a means to easily settle the Métis grievances. Posing questions to the Lands Agent regarding the nature of Métis claims, Jackson suggested that either the Dominion Land Agent deal with these claims, or that he refer them to some other inexpensive mode of arbitration. In seeking to untangle these claims, Jackson sought solutions to problems created when more than one party occupied and had improvements on the same section. Jackson asked the following:

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[42] Edgar Dewdney to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Telegram, 29 August 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[43] Edgar Dewdney to John A. Macdonald, Minister of the Interior, Telegram, 29 August 1882, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[44] T.W. Jackson to Mr. J. Gordon, 13 February 1883, File 42479, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

- If these plots did not conform to "legal subdivision", how were each individual's claims to be determined?
- If an individual's buildings or cultivation were spread over more than one section, what would be the rights of the individual in making entry?
- What would be the rights of the individual if, after survey, their plots of land were to be found on Hudson's Bay Company or school lands?
- To what extent would the Department recognize any transfer of lands made and recognized by the Half breeds?
- If recognized, to what extent is possession evidence of such transfer?
- In cases where plots of land have been sold, what rights succeed to the purchaser?[45]

Jackson also requested that the rules governing land patents be varied and that the Government treat the Métis with "liberal considerations." They deserved these considerations because of their prior occupancy but also because the plots of lands they occupied along the Qu'Appelle Lakes and River had very little land suitable for cultivation. Regardless, they cultivated these plots "without even the commonest agricultural implements."[46]

As Jackson advocated to the local Land Agent, Dewdney continued pressing the Minister of the Interior. Dewdney reminded the Minister of the Métis' previous petition and their conflicting claims with the Ontario and Qu'Appelle Land Company. Expressing urgency, he implored Macdonald to act on the Métis claims.[47] "The sooner their claims are dealt with, the better," he argued in March 1883. Many of the petitioners, "deserved consideration" of their claims because he viewed them as bona fide settlers. "There are a number of half-breeds in this district who have settled in the Qu'Appelle Valley for many years," Dewdney described. "[They] went on their usual hunt for buffalo, returning to their homes at different times during the year. [While] others have settled since 1879 and have remained pretty constantly on their land." [48]

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[45] T.W. Jackson to Mr. J. Gordon, 13 February 1883, File 42479, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[46]T.W. Jackson to Mr. J. Gordon, 13 February 1883, File 42479, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[47] Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor, North-West Territories to Minister of the Interior, March 19, 1883, No. 116. *Canada Session Papers,* 1885.
[48] Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor, North-West Territories to Minister of the Interior, March 19, 1883, No. 116. *Canada Session Papers,* 1885.

The necessity of settling Métis claims was clear, but was complicated by the very nature of Métis land holding practices. Métis plots of land were irregular in size and shape and did not conform to the square township system laid out by the Dominion Lands Survey (Figure 6.3). Holdings often straddled survey lines and in many instances, multiple families occupied an individual survey section, particularly those that fronted the Qu'Appelle Lakes or river. Most, Dewdney noted, had not claimed long, narrow river lots like Métis in other parts of the North-West, but that the bulk of the claimants had taken up irregular sized and shaped homesteads close to one another and near to the water so that they could catch fish. Indeed, the Métis followed a land holding practice that privileged their way of life and the natural landscape. Although more haphazard than in other parts of the North-West, Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley did indeed occupy the land according to a river lot system. For those who fronted the water, their plots were generally long and narrow, whereas others occupied plots of land of irregular shape and size, removed from the waterfront, but within reasonable access. This ensured that the Métis could utilize different landscapes and provided access to a variety of resources.

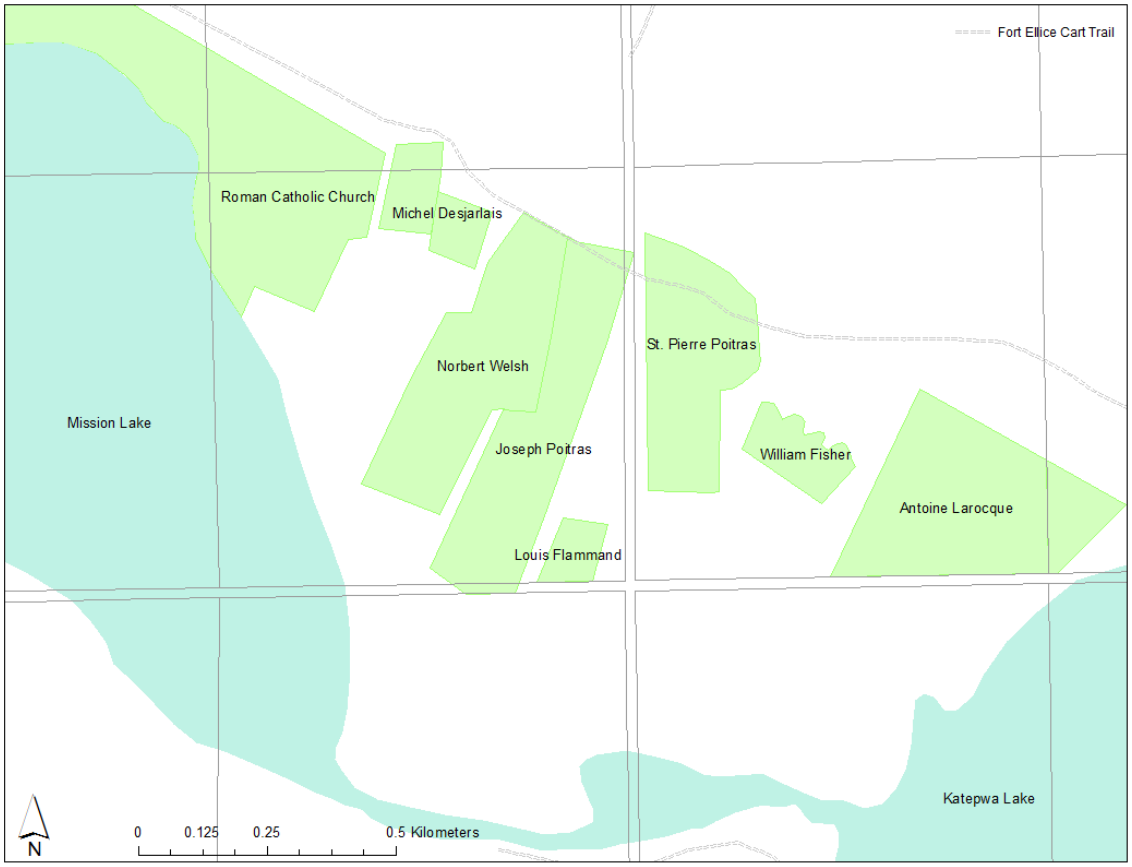

Figure 6.3: Métis claims (Twp 21-R 13-W2), T.R. Hewson survey, June 1881.

Regardless of the size, shape or location of the lot they currently occupied, the Métis believed themselves entitled to the amount of land equivalent to that of a regular river lot. A regular river lot was approximately 500 feet wide by two miles in length. This, Dewdney asserted, made it "very difficult to suggest a plan for settlement of their claims."[49] These overlapping claims caused much concern for the Métis and Government, as lands held by the Métis were also becoming increasingly valuable to Euro-Canadian settlers and land speculators. In many instances, Dewdney argued, these lands prompted "a scramble…by land speculators to obtain the right, titles and interest of those who

[49] Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor, North-West Territories to Minister of the Interior, March 19, 1883. Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

settled in the most favored localities."[50] The easiest solution, Dewdney suggested, if the parties were unable to agree amongst themselves to a fair division of the property, might be to sell the claims and divide the proceeds amongst the claimants. Claimants had the privilege of selecting homestead on any unoccupied Government land with patent issued immediately, provided they had occupied their old claim for some time. He advised the Minister that the best way to deal with the matter would be through an independent third party in "no way connected to the land speculators in the Qu'Appelle Valley."[51]

Upon receipt of Dewdney's letter, the Minister of the Interior referred the matter to Dominion Lands Commissioner A. Walsh in July, asking him to investigate and report on the Métis claims.[52] However, due to more pressing business, Walsh did not immediately visit the Qu'Appelle Valley.[53] Instead, Dominion Lands Inspector William Pearce visited the following month to inspect and adjust existing claims.[54] He took evidence of eleven cases, seven of which he settled immediately and four which required further investigation. He held two over for investigation and decision until the Commissioner of Dominion Lands Walsh could visit the following April. At the time of Pearce's inspection, two or three additional claimants came forward presenting new

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[50] Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor, North-West Territories to Minister of the Interior, March 19, 1883. Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[51] Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor, North-West Territories to Minister of the Interior, 19 March 1883. Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[52] John R. Hall, Acting Secretary, Department of the Interior to Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories, 6 July 1883, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; John R. Hall, Acting Secretary, Department of the Interior to A. Walsh, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 6 July 1883, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[53] John R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior to T.W. Jackson, 13 March 1884, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[54] William Pearce was recruited in 1872 by Dominion Surveyor General John Stoughton Dennis (who the Qu'Appelle Métis spoke about in their May 1873 petition) to survey parts of Manitoba and the North-West Territories. In February 1882, he was appointed Inspector of Dominion Lands agencies, which along with the Office of Commissioner of Dominion Lands constituted the newly formed Dominion Lands Board within the Department of the Interior. The Land Board's role was to supervise Land offices as they opened in the North-West and ensure local agents complied with land policy. They were to adjudicate all land disputes and advise government on the development of lands and resources. In his work, Pearce insisted on strict compliance. In 1883 he investigated the land claims of Métis along the North Saskatchewan River between Battleford and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. His failure to complete this task before 1885 was seen by some as being a factor in the 1885 Resistance. For more information see: David Breen, "William Pearce," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/pearce_william_15E.html.

claims, asking that he investigate. That new claims continued to come forward three years following survey perplexed Dominion Lands officials. Rationalizing the delay, officials looked to the economic lifestyle and mobility of the Métis, reasoning that they were not seriously interested in taking up the land for farming. According to surveyors, the Métis

> did not take up land for agricultural pursuits but merely as a temporary residence, the soil or area to be obtained was never taken into consideration, the points considered being food, water and if possible, a point where fish could be obtained, also they like to have neighbors around them, being extremely gregarious in their inclinations."[55]

During the summer, they reasoned, the Métis lived on the plains hunting and freighting, spending the winter at places such as Fort Qu'Appelle or Wood Mountain. At each of these places, they would build a small log house and stable, and if family remained there during the summer, they would grow a small garden, potatoes and possibly some barley.

> Very often these places would not be occupied for one or two years in which case the house being built of small poplar logs with thatched or sod roof would become utterly worthless the fences burned up by the prairie fires or by their neighbours so that the surveyor or anyone else seeing the places could come to no other conclusion than it was an abandoned claim.[56]

A few months later, Jackson reached out to Minister of the Interior, Senator David Lewis Macpherson requesting further settlement of the Métis claims. Appointed to the Senate upon Confederation in 1867, Macpherson was a successful business man, railway supporter and politician. He was also a close associate of John A. Macdonald and loyal member of the Conservation Party. In 1881 he became Minister of the Department of the Interior on a temporary basis. In October 1883 formally became Minister of the Interior with Macdonald retaining responsibility for Indian Affairs and the North-West Mounted Police.[57] Addressing the Minister privately on behalf of several Métis, Jackson reminded the Minister that the Métis had repeatedly informed Government of their grievances.

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[55] Half-Breed settlers in Qu'Appelle Valley, that surveyors took evidence as to Right and Settlement in 1882 and 1883, Memorandum, 6 June 1885, HB 188, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol 172, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[56]Half-Breed settlers in Qu'Appelle Valley, that surveyors took evidence as to Right and Settlement in 1882 and 1883, Memorandum, 6 June 1885, HB 188, RG 15, D-II-3, Vol 172, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[57] Ken Cruikshank, "Sir David Lewis Macpherson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/macpherson_david_lewis_12E.html.

Asking for his personal attention, he rationalized that there would be few claims to deal with and most would not be troublesome. Most of these were Métis "who have never received anything from the Government, and who, it has been admitted, are entitled to some consideration."[58] The following spring, Jackson received a response that the Minister was very anxious to have the Métis claims settled and had, the previous September, instructed Walsh to investigate.[59] No mention was made of Pearce's inspection or adjustment of claims and Jackson heard nothing more on the matter.

Registering Pre-Existing Claims

As Qu'Appelle Métis had demonstrated through their petitioning of Government leading up to survey, they were eager to have their pre-existing claims recognized. Having lived and worked the land prior to survey, most had built homes and outbuildings and had lands broken, cropped and fenced. Not eager to conform to the square township system, they recognized the necessity of protecting their investment in the land. For those that occupied land prior to survey, the Dominion Lands Act required that they register their parcel with the nearest Dominion Lands Agent. Their prior occupancy and existing improvements allowed them to make direct application for patent, rather than making an application for homestead and having to make the improvements required of new homesteaders. If unable to make application at the time of survey, pre-existing occupants were to enter their claim as soon as possible with the nearest Dominion Lands Agent. Applying for patent to their land as a homestead was the only possible means for pre-existing occupants to maintain and protect their occupancy. If they did not enter their pre-existing claim they forfeited their claim to their land and it became available for incoming settlers to homestead. The Dominion Lands Act and homestead policy treated Métis entering their pre-existing claims as settlers, recognizing their lands as homesteads based on their prior occupancy, rather than on any pre-existing Métis rights to the land.

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[58] T.W. Jackson to Minister D. Macpherson, 8 December 1883, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[59] John R. Hall, Secretary, Department of the Interior to T.W. Jackson, 13 March 1884, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No. 116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

For the Métis, converting existing claims into the square township system was problematic. Métis land tenure and economic practices conflicted with the square township survey system and homestead policy. The requirement that homesteaders maintain continual residency may have been a means to encourage long-term agriculture and deter land speculators, but it also conflicted with Métis lifestyles that necessitated individuals be away from their homes hunting or working for extended periods of time.

Recognizing the need to adjust to the new agricultural order, as Métis began registering their existing claims, they also began to identify as farmers.[60] By 1881 as many as 68 Métis households labeled themselves as farmers, rather than strictly as hunters.[61] This was likely due to the necessity of meeting homestead regulations which required individuals to demonstrate they intended to take up agriculture. Despite their declaration as farmers, most continued to rely on hunting, fishing, and freighting work and were regularly away from their properties for months at a time, engaged in such activity.[62] This type of outside employment and time away from home was common for Euro-Canadian homesteaders as well.[63] However, not all Métis chose to see themselves as farmers to meet the new requirements. Twenty-three households declared their occupation as hunters despite their mixed economic practice. For instance, hunters Xavier Desnomme and Alexander Fisher Jr. both engaged in farming activity and registered their existing land claims with the Dominion Lands Branch. Based on their prior occupancy and cultivation of the land they received patent to their lands as farmers, demonstrating that at once, these individuals were both hunters and farmers.

When Qu'Appelle Métis began registering their pre-existing claims they did so as settlers. Their claim was based on prior occupancy and improvements they had made, not

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[60] Canada Census Returns 1881, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan

[61] 23 identified strictly as hunters. Sixteen of these households had more than one individual identified as a farmer. In these instances, the sons or grandsons of the head of household, some as young as 14 or 15 years of age, were also listed as farmers.

[62] Canada Census Returns 1881, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan; Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[63] Bill Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 2005), 112.

on any outstanding issue of Métis rights that may have existed. The issue of Métis rights or land allocations based on the Manitoba Act remained unsettled in the North-West. In total, there were at least 104 Métis individuals occupying plots of land in the immediate Qu'Appelle Lakes region before they began registering claims. Each had lived on their property prior to survey or prior to 1883 and so applied directly for patent rather than for homestead entry. For the most part, the Métis lived clustered around the Qu'Appelle Lakes and the Roman Catholic Mission at Lebret.

The size and scope of Métis claims varied, but they were generally relatively small plots of land (Figure 6.4). A sample of 91 existing claims reveals that 50 were less than ten acres in size. Twenty-eight were between 10 and 19 acres; nine were 20 to 29 acres; and four were more than 30 acres.[64] Sixty-two of these claimants declared that they had fenced at least part of their property (Figure 6.5). Fencing was not only necessary for those that had some livestock, but also physically demonstrated occupation. Thirteen had less than 10 acres fenced; sixteen had between 10 to 19 acres fenced; twenty-three had between 20 to 29 acres fenced; and ten had more than 30 acres fenced. Of these 10, five had 30-40 acres fenced; four had 60 to 80 acres fence; and one, Xavier Desnomme, had 140 acres fenced. Desnomme lived on SE 34-20-14-W2 with his wife and three children. By 1881, he built a house, 2 stables and a storehouse and by 1886 had 18 acres of land broken, most of which he farmed. He also owned at least 7 horses.[65] Desnomme had a growing farm, and by Government criteria would have been determined a bona fide settler. That Desnomme had such a large amount of land fenced suggests his intention to farm more land, acquire more horses, or even raise cattle. However, his declaration as a hunter, rather than a farmer in the 1881 census reveals his insistence on maintaining a mixed subsistence economy and that he was not yet ready to rely solely on agricultural production.

[64] Not all 104 claims included this information. Data represents what was available from the 104 applications

[65] Xavier Desnomme, Statement, 16 August 1886, File 345.70, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

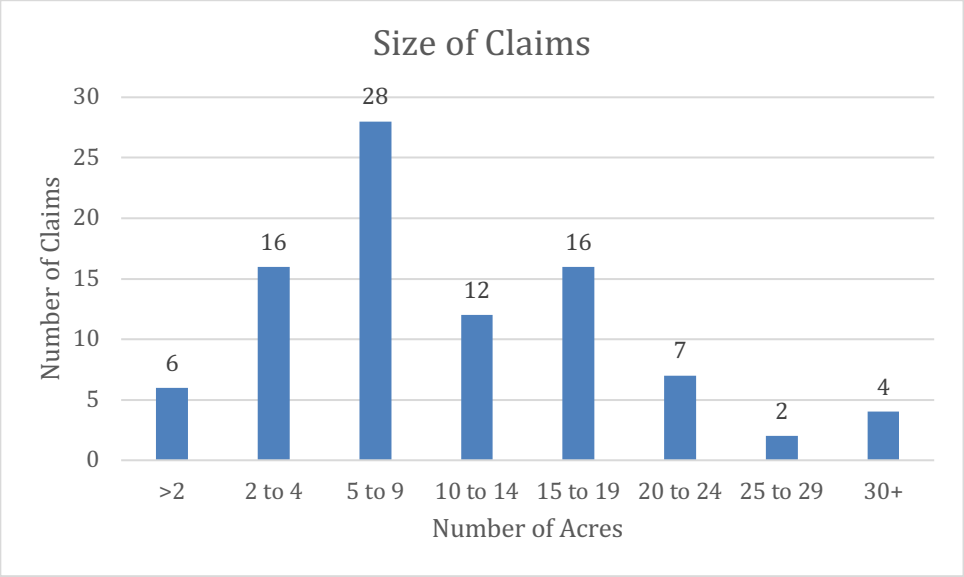

Figure 6.4: Size of Pre-existing Métis Claims

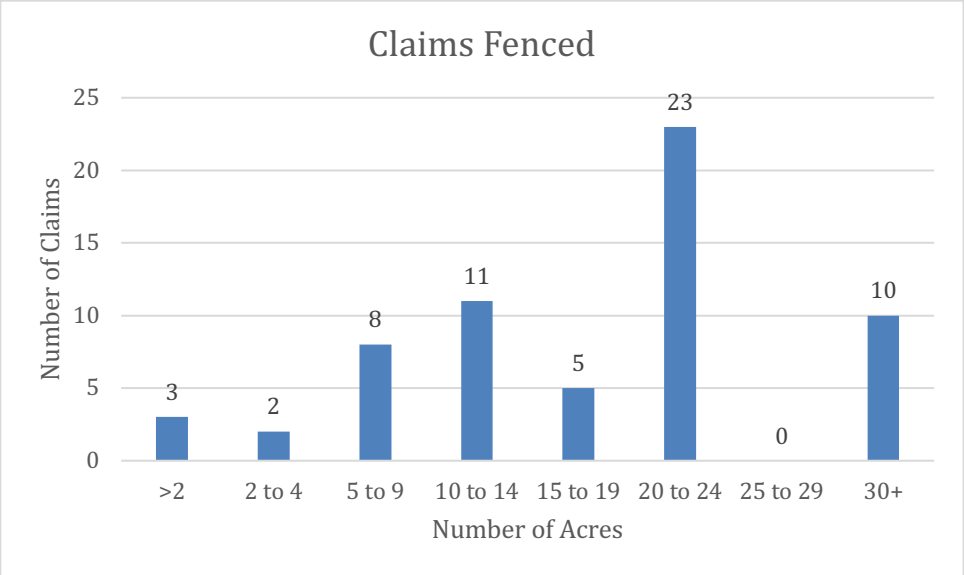

Figure 6.5: Acres Fenced

Desnomme may have not been ready to commit entirely to agriculture but there were some Métis in both the Qu'Appelle Valley and St. Delphine area that were seeing some success in farming and ranching. Following the provision of scrip in 1885, St. Delphine, located close to the File Hills reserves, was increasingly became home to Métis families looking to secure land and engage in farming and ranching. By 1899, Antoine

Hamelin was raising about 30 cattle and 15 horses there.[66] Likewise, by 1891 Jean Baptiste Dauphinais was raising a herd of over 45 cattle and 60 horses.[67] In the Valley, some were also seeing some success with horses and cattle. In 1886, Jean Blondeau was raising approximately 20 cattle and Michel Klyne had a herd of 30 cattle.[68] However, by far the largest rancher was Norbert Welsh who in the span of five years increased his cattle herd from 65 in 1894 to almost 200 head in 1899. He also had a herd of about 30 horses.[69] Although, these individuals represented an anomaly amongst their Métis friends and relatives, these numbers demonstrate that there was opportunity for success if you had the land and the means. Securing land ultimately benefitted individuals such as these who operated considerable ranching operations.

Métis claims generally consisted of a small log home, stable and a few other outbuildings. Often families started by building a small one or two room log home and added on rooms as their families grew or as they needed more space. Thomas Kavanaugh and Elise Klyne's home appears to have two additions added to the original building (Figure 6.6). Their home was somewhat larger than most of the homes in the settlement, measuring approximately 18 feet wide by 36 feet long at the time he registered his claim in 1883. The addition of extra lean-tos or buildings was a common feature to Métis homes throughout the plains.[70] This was a feature carried over from when Métis buffalo hunters wintered on the plains. During that period, homes were more temporary and it was practical to build homes in one long structure rather than having multiple outbuildings (Figure 6.7). Constructing homes this way required less building materials and were easier to heat during the winter. In the wintering villages, often the additional buildings acted as storehouses for supplies and stables for horses or livestock.[71]

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[66] Antoine Hamelin, Statement, 19 July 1906, File 250503, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.;
[67] Lionel Charette, Sworn Statement in Support of Jean Baptiste Dauphinais, 4 January 1906, File 567946, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[68] Jean Blondeau, Statement, 13 August 1889, File 240969, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; John Blondeau, Sworn Statement for Michel Klyne, 25 May 1914, File 330882, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[69] Norbert Welsh, Statement, 18 November 1899, File 450070, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[70] David Burley, "Creolization and Late Nineteenth Century Métis Vernacular Log Architecture on the South Saskatchewan River," *Historical Archaeology,* Vol. 34, No. 3 (2000): 27-35.
[71] Burley, "Creolization,".

Figure 6.6: Thomas Kavanaugh and Elise Klyne home c.1880[72]

Figure 6.7: Métis home, Wood Mountain Wintering village c. 1874[73]

[72] Thomas Kavanaugh and Elise Klyne home [1880], R-A 7483, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[73] Métis Settlement, Wood Mountain [1874], C-081758, Library and Archives Canada.

In the Qu'Appelle settlement, most homes were less than 400 square feet but there were a few that were significantly larger (Figure 6.8). Thirteen homes were smaller than 200 square feet, sixty-one homes were between 200 and 400 square feet and 21 were larger than 400 square feet. Of those larger than 400 square feet, 8 were between 400 and 500 square feet, and 13 larger than 500. Three of these were considerably larger. For instance, both Antoine Larocque's and Pierre Poitras' measured 800 square feet and Antoine Fayant's home was an impressive 1125 square feet. Most claimants had at least one outbuilding, most often a stable (Figure 6.9). Stables housed livestock as most Métis maintained at least a small herd of horses, two being the natural minimum required for field work. Some however, had more than 2, and many also raised cattle and pigs as well. Barns and granaries were also common. Barns were necessary for storing livestock feed, and granaries to store any grain produced for market sale. Twelve individuals recorded having a granary, indicating that they may have been producing enough hay or barley for storage. Common outbuildings included storehouses, shed and in some cases, a separate kitchen. Thirty-five had at least one storehouse or shed, generally used for storing any kind of farm implements. Five individuals had separate kitchens, called summer kitchens, that they used during the summer months when it was too hot to cook and prepare foods in the home. This was the time of year when a significant amount of food preparation and preservation took place and so the Métis welcomed extra cooking space. In addition, two also had hen houses or milk houses revealing that they maintained at least a small number of these animals for subsistence. Four claims also had wells.

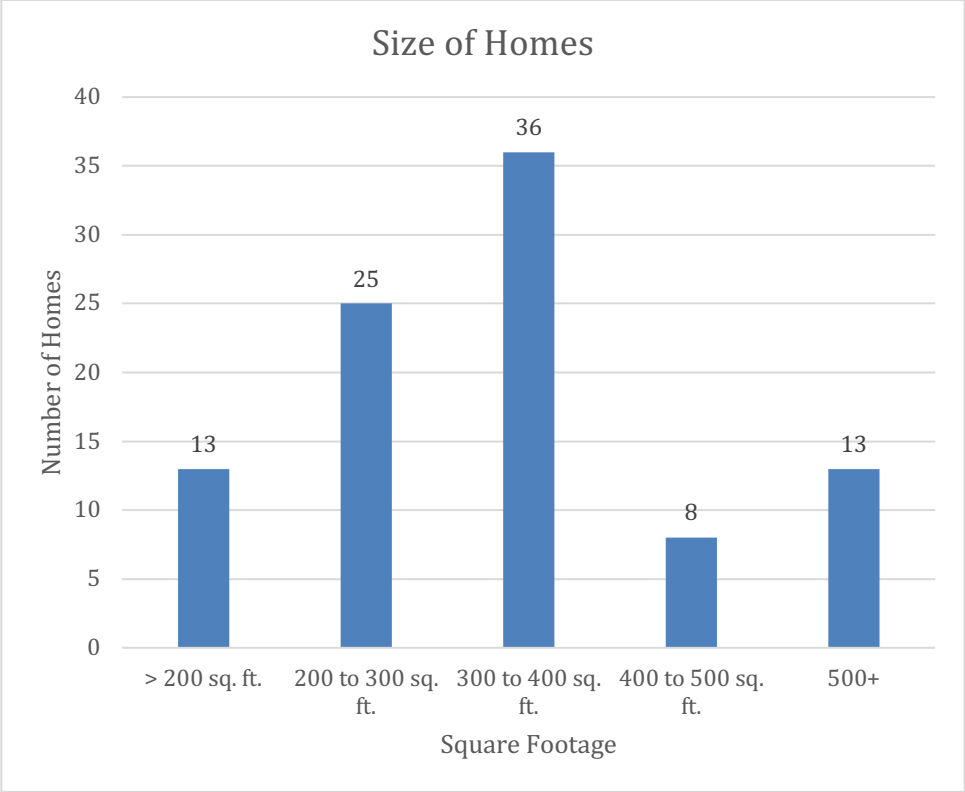

Figure 6.8: Home Size

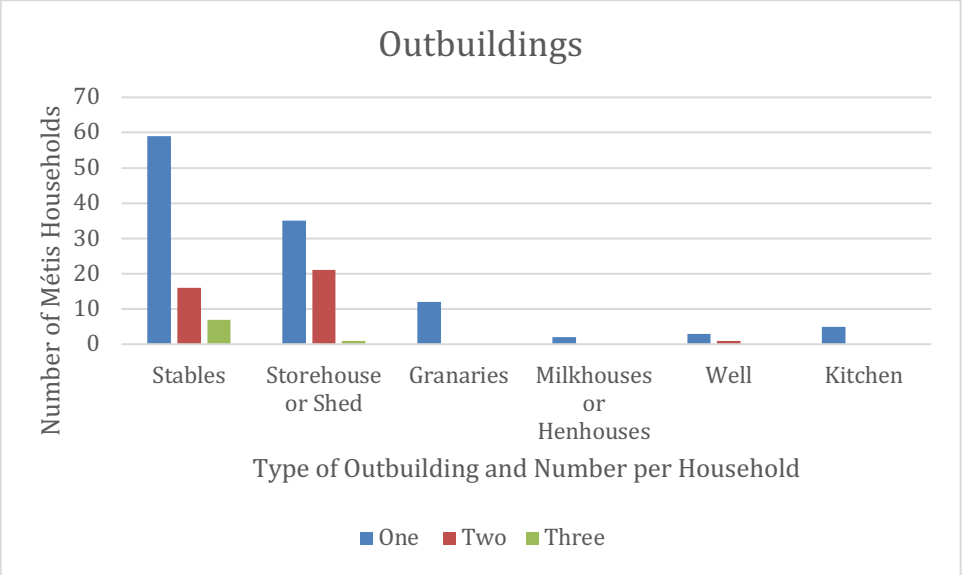

Figure 6.9: Outbuildings

Conclusion

As the imposition of the Dominion Lands Act and homestead policy artificially divided up Métis land holding and located multiple claims on individual township

sections, Métis occupied a tenuous position often challenged by a distant and unsympathetic administration. They were anxious about maintaining their lands in a new political order and had questions that needed answering lest they be vulnerable to the imposition of colonial land policies and incoming settlement.

Qu'Appelle Métis continued petitioning for recognition of rights to the lands they currently occupied, but also rights based on their prior occupancy in the North-West Territories and fulfillment of promises made under the Manitoba Act. They found themselves in a shared contest with First Nations and the Government for access to land. With Treaty signing the Government recognized the distinction between First Nations and Métis, and held true to those differences in how they responded to and acknowledged First Nations and Métis rights.

The Dominion Lands survey reorganized Métis land holdings as settler spaces and required they conform to the standardized square township system. The Métis continued advocating to have their land disputes heard and adjusted. Petitioning was a familiar political strategy for the Métis to raise their concerns. They saw themselves as part of a larger community, connected to Métis in Manitoba and across the West. Qu'Appelle Valley Métis continued to voice their concerns and demand recognition of their rights.

Registering their existing claims as settlers within homestead policy was the only way the Métis could maintain their land holdings. In doing so, they demonstrated to the Government that they already practiced small-scale agriculture in addition to maintaining a subsistence lifestyle. They made the shift to a new system of land holding occupying their lands as settlers and secured land title in a way recognized by the Government. Tensions over land tenure, however, remained high and was complicated by the fact that the Government was only willing to deal with the Métis as settlers, recognizing their rights as prior occupants of specific parcels of land. The Government was not willing to recognize any unextinguished land rights Métis possessed from their occupancy of the North-West Territories prior to the imposition of Canadian authority. The Government had yet to address these rights, and was not willing to do so until forced by Louis Riel and his supporters.

Chapter Seven: Securing Land Tenure: The North-West Half-Breed Scrip Commission and Homesteading

By 1885, Qu'Appelle Métis, like other Métis across the North-West still waited for Government to deal with their rights based on existing Indian title outside the province of Manitoba. These were rights for the use and occupancy of a broad hunting territory collectively held by Métis in the North-West Territories. These were rights that Qu'Appelle Métis and others had petitioned Government to recognize throughout the 1870s. It had been fifteen years since the Manitoba Act, 1870 had established a process to extinguish Métis' Indian title in Manitoba and six years since amendments were made to the Dominion Lands Act, 1879 affirming that Government would deal with Métis rights in the North-West Territories. Métis in the North-West however, would not remain patient much longer. Tensions were rising as the Dominion Government continued to impose the land survey, dividing up the landscape according to a square grid system. Increasingly Métis were concerned that Government would not recognize their rights, including their right to use familiar land tenure practices within the new order. As Métis found themselves further immersed in a foreign bureaucratic and administrative system, they continued to press their claims, expecting Government to act.

Frustrated with Government inaction, Métis in the South Saskatchewan River region sought out Louis Riel to champion their cause. Certain of his leadership and negotiating prowess, he had challenged the Dominion Government in 1869-70 and succeeded in securing the recognition of Métis rights with the creation of the province of Manitoba. Returning from exile in the United States, at Batoche Riel quickly began gathering support and peacefully advocating for Government to act. Ignored, he and his supporters moved toward organized and armed resistance, forcing Government to deal with Métis concerns.

With the threat of violence and of Métis uprising, Government finally acted.[1] Although a January 1885 Order in Council had authorized the creation of a Commission

[1] Ken Hatt, "North-West Rebellion Scrip Commissions, 1885-1889," in *1885 and After: Native Society in Transition*, ed. F. Laurie Barron and James B. Waldram (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1986) 191.

to deal with Métis rights, it was not until 30 March 1885, four days after the military defeat of Major Crozier and a party of North-West Mounted Police in the Battle of Duck Lake that an Order in Council authorized the Commission work to begin.[2] Pushed to deal with the Métis, Government dusted off Manitoba scrip policy as a framework for dealing with Métis. The provision of land or money scrip to Métis heads of households and their children was a means for extinguishing existing Indian title to land in Manitoba. Land scrip was a paper certificate that entitled the named claimant to either 160 or 240 acres of surveyed and unoccupied land. Money scrip was a certificate that granted the bearer $160 or $240, exchangeable at the Dominion Lands Office for surveyed and unoccupied land at the price of $1.00 per acre. Much of this scrip land ended up in the hands of banks and land speculators. Part of Ottawa's plan to settle the west, scrip policy was a means to remove Métis from the land unless they were committed to becoming bona fide settlers and farmers. Comparable to the First Nation's treaty process in that both were intended to remove Indigenous peoples from the land, scrip dealt with Métis rights on an individual basis, unlike the collective way First Nations rights were addressed in treaties.

In the Qu'Appelle Valley, many Métis had already secured their land holdings in the new social and political order, registering their pre-existing claims as settlers through the homestead process. Others anticipated securing land through Government recognition of their unextinguished rights in the North-West Territories, much like in Manitoba. By March 1885, Government was finally ready to listen and aimed to deal with the Métis in fair and equitable way. Scrip policy dealt with Qu'Appelle Métis in different ways, depending upon their needs and sometimes to their benefit. As Government amended scrip policy to recognize pre-existing ownership under homestead policy, Métis made demands about the policy direction and type of scrip, land or money, that would best meet their immediate needs. They pressed Government to deal with their small waterfront claims in a manner that benefitted them and they insisted that Government make accommodations for Métis who wished to withdraw from First Nations treaties and take advantage of scrip.

[2] Order in Council 1885-0135, 28 January 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.; Order in Council 1885-0688, 30 March 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.

The scrip system appeared to be working to meet Métis needs but challenges remained. Government was often slow to distribute scrip, and its very nature encouraged speculation. The flaws in the system allowed scrip speculators to quickly and easily buy up any available scrip certificates. Merchants and bankers purchased up scrip as quickly as they could. Those Métis most destitute were also the most vulnerable and had few options but to sell, paying off local merchants or purchasing supplies to meet their immediate needs. Others were able to use their scrip, along with homestead policy, to secure land in the Qu'Appelle Valley and at File Hills, re-establishing themselves along extended family lines. Even though these policies intended to secure Métis land tenure, it was difficult for individuals to maintain land ownership and they frequently faced discrimination and racism from unsympathetic Dominion Lands Agents. The implementation of the North-West Half-Breed Scrip Commission increasingly immersed Métis in a complicated bureaucracy, yet they continued advocating for their interests, finding ways to position themselves in a system beleaguered with challenges. They attempted to secure land tenure so they might continue to live in familiar territory and according to a recognizable worldview. Some acted in practical ways to alleviate their immediate poverty whereas others found ways to secure more long-term benefit.

The North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission

In late January 1885, the Minister of the Interior recommended to the Privy Council that it was now time to equitably settle outstanding Métis claims in the North-West Territories. Government amended the Dominion Lands Act in 1879 to accommodate the extinguishment of existing Métis' Indian Title in the North-West Territories, but action had yet to occur.[3] To settle these claims, the Minister of the Interior advised the process must begin with an enumeration, which he believed a three-person commission could conduct.[4] A 28 January 1885 Order in Council confirmed the creation of the Commission and its intent to conduct an enumeration, but it did not include any

[3] Dominion Lands Act, 1879, Cap. 31, Sec. 125.
[4] David Macpherson, Minister of the Interior to the Privy Council, 26 January 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

commitment to extinguish Métis rights or to distribute scrip.[5] Policy makers moved quickly, and only days later plans to "wind up the troublesome claims" of the Métis began taking shape.[6] However, it was not until late March that the Minister of the Interior appointed Commissioners to the North-West Half Breed Claims Commission. Commissioners included Ontario lawyer, William Purvis Street, acting as Chairman of the Commission, accompanied by Roger Goulet, a Dominion Land Surveyor from St. Boniface, Manitoba, and lawyer and Clerk of the North-West Council, Amédeé Edmond Forget of Regina. Narcisse Omer Cote, Secretary for the Department of the Interior acted as Secretary of the Commission.

Their instruction was to travel to communities across the North-West, reporting the names of Métis heads of families and children living in the North-West Territories prior to the creation of Manitoba on 15 July 1870, as well as the names of those deceased and their heirs. Commissioners were to report on any grievances the Métis had, either against the Government or amongst themselves in connection to surveys of their lots, and to hear evidence and take declarations from Métis on the spot.[7] Claimants were to come before the Commission to complete a declaration providing evidence about residence, occupation, family genealogy, names and birth dates of children. Their application was reviewed against ledger books listing previous claimants from Manitoba and then, in most cases, if their application was approved, they received a scrip certificate for land or money scrip.[8] Initially, the Commissions only purpose was enumeration, but before embarking on its travels, Street requested a meeting with Prime Minister John A. Macdonald asking that their powers be increased and they be allowed to offer scrip to eligible Métis.[9] Macdonald agreed and authorized the Commission additional powers including the power to take evidence and settle claims on the spot.

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[5] Order in Council 1885-0135, 28 January 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.
[6] W.P.R. Street, "The Commission of 1885 to The North-West Territories," *Canadian Historical Review*, with Introduction by H.H. Langton, Vol. 25, no. 1 (1944): 44-45.
[7] Street, "Commission," 45.
[8] For more on the way in which scrip was administered see: Frank Tough and Erin McGregor, "'Rights to the Lands."
[9] Street, "Commission," 45-46.

The work of the Commission, the Government hoped, would quiet the Métis and satisfy them that the Government was going to deal with them in good faith.[10] Consequently, the work of the Commission would not only extinguish Métis land title once and for all, but clear the way for unencumbered settlement of the North-West. Historical geographer Frank Tough argues that not only was the scrip system used to transform prairie land use and tenure, but that the Dominion Government used the scrip system to facilitate western settlement, promoting the privatization and sale of public homestead lands to the benefit of farmers, ranchers, bankers and land speculators.[11] The process of issuing scrip quickly extinguished Métis rights. Government implemented this process to help diffuse growing tension among the Métis in the North-West as it struck the Commission almost simultaneous to Métis resistance.

A Report from the Minister of the Interior, approved by Order in Council on 30 March 1885, laid out the powers of the Commission.[12] Its authority stemmed from the Order in Council and from the Dominion Lands Act, 1883.[13] Amendments made to the Act in 1879 included claims for Métis resident in the North-West Territories, outside of Manitoba, but the Act did not outline policy or procedure for extinguishing claims.[14] The Minister argued that the Governor General had the power "to satisfy any claims existing in connection with the extinguishment of the Indian title preferred by half-breeds resident in the North-West Territories outside the limits of Manitoba previous" to 15 July 1870 by "granting land to such persons, to such extent and on such terms and conditions as may be deemed expedient."[15] This was in contrast to how Government had dealt with Manitoba Métis, where the Manitoba Act specifically set aside land for the extinguishment of Métis rights. Instead, in the North-West Territories, a series of Orders

[10] Street, "Commission," 40.
[11] Tough and McGregor, "Rights to the Lands," 39, 55.
[12] Order in Council 1885-0688, 30 March 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.
[13] Dominion Lands Act, 1883, Vic. 46, Cap.17, Sec.81e.
[14] Sawchuk et al., Métis *Land Rights*, 94.
[15] John McGee, Clerk Privy Council to the Minister of the Interior, Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on Council on 30 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

in Councils laid out policy for extinguishing Métis rights. Throughout the 1880s and into the 1890s, twelve Orders clarified the scrip policy.[16]

In the North-West Territories, like Manitoba, the Dominion Government allocated both land and money scrip.[17] Land scrip certificates, made out for a specific number of acres, required the grantee to present the certificate at a Dominion Lands Office in exchange for unoccupied surveyed land. Once exchanged, patent for the parcel of land would immediately be issued. Land scrip was transferable to another individual prior to the issue of patent. Money scrip was a coupon for a specific dollar amount, payable to the bearer and exchangeable at the Dominion Lands Office for unoccupied surveyed land, initially at a rate of $1.00 per acre. To be eligible for scrip, Métis had to have been resident in the North-West Territories (outside of the province of Manitoba) at the time of effective Canadian authority over the region on 15 July 1870. North-West Half-Breed Scrip policy initially authorized Half-Breed heads of families, if they already occupied a parcel of land, to receive that land to the extent of 160 acres. If less than 160 acres, Commissioners were to issue a scrip certificate for the difference. If Half-Breed heads of families did not already occupy a parcel of land, they received scrip for $160 dollars, redeemable in land at $1.00 per acre. Children of Half-Breed heads of families, if they already occupied a parcel of land, were to receive that land to the extent of 240 acres. If less than 240 acres, they received scrip for the difference, redeemable at $1.00 per acre. Children not already occupying land, were to receive $240 scrip, redeemable in land.

Initial dates were set for the Commission to visit Fort Qu'Appelle, Touchwood Hills, Regina, Maple Creek, Calgary and Fort McLeod, with future dates set to visit St. Albert, Edmonton, Fort Saskatchewan, Victoria, Fort Pitt, Battleford, St. Laurent, St. Louis De Langevin, Duck Lake, St. Antoine de Padoue and Prince Albert. Dominion Land Offices helped distributed public notices and the Minister's Office communicated its plans to the Department of Indian Affairs, the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and

[16] Augustus, "The Scrip Solution,".
[17] Order in Council 1885-0688, 30 March 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.; John McGee, Clerk Privy Council to the Minister of the Interior. Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on Council on 30, March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP).[18] The Minister's Office requested the CPR and the NWMP assist "in every possible way" and to distribute notices of upcoming sittings. In addition, they invited Indian Affairs to have local Indian Agents attend. Deputy Minister of the Interior, A.M. Burgess anticipated that Treaty First Nations would appear before the Commission and be enumerated as half-breeds.[19] The presence of Indian Agents would alleviate any confusion or tension that arose. He suggested that "care should be taken" to explain that they were ineligible for enumeration but that when they applied for enfranchisement under the Indian Act Government would deal with them in an equitable and liberal way. Indian Affairs agreed to have Agents present to identify treaty individuals who claimed both a treaty annuity and the right to participate in scrip.[20]

The Commission planned their first sittings for 7-8 April in Fort Qu'Appelle. Burgess notified member of the North-West Council, T.W. Jackson at Fort Qu'Appelle of the Commission's intended visit and he relayed information to the Métis.[21] Challenges plagued the Commission even before it began sitting. Only days into their work, Commissioner Street had concerns. On their way to Fort Qu'Appelle he wrote to the Minister of the Interior, David Macpherson, requesting the power to provide both scrip and land title to those eligible for scrip if they already occupied parcels of land. He argued that these individuals had property rights based on their occupancy in addition to

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[18] A.M. Burgess to John M. Egan, Western Division Canadian Pacific Railway, 30 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; A.M. Burgess to C. Drinkwater, Secretary, Canadian Pacific Railway, 30 March 30 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; A.M. Burgess to T.R. Burpé, Secretary of Land Board, 30 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; A.M. Burgess to Lawrence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, 30 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; A.M. Burgess to Fred White, Comptroller of the North-West Mounted Police, 30 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[19] A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior to W.P. Street, 30 March1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[20] Lawrence Vankoughnet, Deputy Superintendent General, Indian Affairs to A.M. Burgess Deputy Minister of the Interior, 1 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[21] A.M. Burgess to T.W. Jackson, 31 March 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

unextinguished Indian title, as described in the Manitoba Act, which made them eligible for scrip. He questioned, if desired by claimants, "would it not be advisable to grant scrip, 160 or 240 dollars, permitting them to acquire title to land in occupation through possession. Otherwise, Government really gives nothing for Indian title."[22] The next day, Street again pleaded his case to the Minister. He also requested the Commission have authority to settle supplementary Manitoba scrip claims by allowing Métis eligible for Manitoba scrip the same terms as those in the North-West Territories.[23] He followed the telegram with a letter detailing his concerns. Providing scrip in the manner outlined by the Government, he argued would be a "serious stumbling with our dealings with the Half-breeds."[24] Using an example he explained to the Minister,

> Suppose we find that a half-breed has been, upon and since July 15 1870 in occupation of a parcel of say 160 acres, under circumstances which, if he were a white settler, would entitle him to a grant of land under the homestead clauses of the Dominion Lands Act: under the authority we now possess we could, if he were the head of a family, allow him nothing more than the 160 acres; we could allow him nothing for his claim as a Half-breed, and inasmuch as the Government has all along been purporting to deal with the Half-breeds as if they had some general rights beyond those of ordinary incoming settlers, my fellow Commissioners say that great dissatisfaction and disappointment will be created if we give to these occupying Half-breeds only that which any ordinary settler can claim, and nothing for the extinguishment of his Indian title. Request that Commission be given the power to: allow the Half-breed to claim the land occupied by him under the homestead provisions, and in addition to give him his scrip for the $160 or $240 as the case may be, for his Indian title.[25]

The Commission argued for the distinction between property rights based on occupancy and Métis rights based on Indian title. They recognized the distinctions and that the Métis would, arguably be discontent if treated as settlers with nothing to compensate for the extinguishment of Indian title based on their presence in the North-West prior to the assertion of Canadian authority over the region. For many in the Qu'Appelle Valley, they

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[22] W.P. Street to David MacPherson, 4 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[23] W.P. Street to David Macpherson, Telegram, 5 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[24] W.P. Street to David Macpherson, 5 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[25] W.P. Street to David Macpherson, 5 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

had already received patent to the land they occupied through the Dominion Lands Act, and so eagerly awaited the opportunity for the Government to deal with their existing Indian title. The Minister responded to Street's request with no objections to giving scrip and allowed occupants to acquire title to land already occupied through possession.[26] With this issue dealt with, the Commission prepared for its first sitting.

The NWHB Claims Commission meets the Qu'Appelle Métis

The Commission arrived in Fort Qu'Appelle on 8 April and immediately met with 27 Métis in Jackson's office. The Métis met the Commission with ambivalence and suspicion. According to Street, the Métis, "were slow to believe us when we told them that we had really come with full power, not only to take the evidence that they were entitled to half-breed rights, but to grant them scrip on the spot."[27] This attitude, he argued, was natural, considering the Government had long acknowledged but not acted on Métis rights. When the Métis understood the full powers of the Commission, "they proceeded to criticize the form in which we were empowered to grant the rights."[28] Jackson offered a more heated interpretation of this exchange. Voicing their concerns to the Commission, the Métis stressed that although Government had ignored their rights for 15 years, it would not be "until the war is over" that the Qu'Appelle Métis would be ready to discuss their claims.[29] The war Métis leaders spoke of was the resistance brewing in the South Saskatchewan River region. Qu'Appelle Métis saw themselves as part of a larger Métis community that spanned the North-West. They supported Riel and Métis at Batoche and believed they had similar rights and grievances. Prior to the first sitting of the Commission, Qu'Appelle Métis had once again petitioned the Government to have their concerns heard and advocate for their rights. They asked that the Commission have the authority to deal with their claims in the North-West Territories, but also those that still existed based on their rights in Manitoba. Many Qu'Appelle Métis, they argued, had not participated in the extinguishment of Métis rights in Manitoba through the scrip process because they were outside the province of Manitoba

[26] David Macpherson to W.P. Street, 6 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[27] Street, "Commission," 48-49.
[28] Street, "Commission," 48-49.
[29] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* 21 January 1886.

when it was implemented. As a result, they argued that they not only had unextinguished rights in the North-West Territories that required attention, but also were due accrued interest on the value of property they could have taken advantage of through the Manitoba scrip process in 1870. They had already waited fifteen years to have their claims settled.[30]

Government inaction had created significant tensions amongst the Métis, not only in Qu'Appelle, but across the North-West. Jackson was well aware of the threat of armed resistance. The previous September, he cautioned Sir Hector Langevin, Secretary of State for the provinces, that if the Métis demands were not met, there was "great danger of the Half-breeds of Qu'Appelle going into rebellion as well."[31] In an effort to diffuse the tension during the sitting of the Commission, Jackson, along with one of the Métis, referenced only as Mr. Fisher, attempted to persuade the rest to accept the same scrip concessions as the Métis in Manitoba had received. This, Jackson argued, along with the request for the immediate settlement of Métis claims, had been the recommendation approved by the North-West Council, on the advice of Archbishop Tache, Bishop Grandin and members of the Council.[32]

At this first meeting, the Métis voiced their concerns loudly.[33] They asked for land scrip instead of money scrip for both children and heads of families, reasoning that Manitoba children of half-breed heads of families had received land scrip, rather than money scrip (Table 7.1).[34] The Commissioners agreed to put the issue of children's scrip before the Government, but refused to do so for heads of families, maintaining that in Manitoba heads of families received only money scrip and not land scrip. The Commission offered heads of families in the North-West Territories equal to what Métis in Manitoba had received. The Métis acquiesced and did not press the issue further. They did, however, make additional requests that the Commission grant scrip to Métis fighting alongside Riel. They spoke with common purpose and strong sympathy, arguing they

[30] Petition, Qu'Appelle Valley Half-Breeds, ca.1885, Half-Breed Claims and Commissions, 1885-1895, Amédée E. And Henriette Forget Papers, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Note: Only part of this document exists in this file. The section listing signatories is missing.
[31] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* 21 January 21, 1886.
[32] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* 21 January 21, 1886.
[33] Street, "Commission," 48-49.
[34] Street, "Commission," 48-49.

were unwilling to accept any settlement unless those fighting with Riel receive the same scrip concessions.[35] The Commission ardently refused their demands, asserting that the Métis taking arms against Government had forfeited any rights they possessed.

	Manitoba Act	**North-West Half-Breed Scrip (original provision)**	**NWHB Scrip Revision**
Half-breed Heads of Families	Land grant of 160 acres or an issue of scrip in the amount of $160 1876 revision by Order in Council: only scrip in the amount of $160, receivable in payment for the purpose of Dominion Lands, should be issued to Métis heads of families.	If occupying land - grant of the lot or portion of land occupied to the extent of 160 acres. If the plot of land is less than 160 acres, scrip issued for the difference. Scrip redeemable in land at the rate of $1 per acre, For those not occupying land – scrip issued $160, redeemable in land.	$160 Scrip in addition to land occupied purchase of small water frontages at $1/acre not to exceed 40 acres. Payment to be made within 2 years. In addition, they be allowed to select 160 acres, the patent for which would be offered after payment received for water front parcel.
Children of Half-breed Heads of Families	Land grant of 240 acres	If occupying land - grant of the lot or portion of land occupied to the extent of 240 acres. If the lot is less then 240 acres, scrip issued for the difference, redeemable in land, at a rate of $1 per acre; or if not occupying land, scrip to be issued for $240	240 acres of land scrip instead of $240 money scrip

Table 7.1: Manitoba Scrip and North-West Half-Breed Scrip

Following this meeting, Street telegraphed Minister Macpherson to inform him of the Métis' outstanding concerns. Referencing the recommendations made in Jackson's letter to Langevin, and given the timing of the Commission in relation to the fight at Duck Lake, Street stressed the necessity of meeting the Métis' concerns if the Commission were to succeed.[36] Consequently, all children, he argued, would refuse money scrip and instead demand scrip for 240 acres of land, the same as provided under the Manitoba Act. Second, he argued that for Métis having "homes on small front unacceptable to buy these at one dollar per acre and free grant of one-sixty acres from

[35] Street, "Commission," 49.
[36] W.P. Street to David Macpherson, Minister of the Interior, Telegram, 6 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* 21 January 1886. Telegram is indicated as undecipherable in the Sessional Papers, but Jackson read a copy during his speech documented in the Qu'Appelle newspaper.

nearest vacant Government land additional to allowance to extinguish Indian title."[37] Macpherson approved the first condition offering children land scrip instead of money, but was confused by and had questions about the second concern regarding Métis occupying small waterfront lots. Did Street wish to offer these Métis scrip equal to the difference in area of their current plot and 160 acres in addition to $160 scrip to heads of families or $240 scrip to children in extinguishment of Indian title?[38] Street clarified that his suggestion was to allow Métis occupying waterfront lots the opportunity to purchase their water frontages at $1.00 per acre and select 160 acres of available homestead land. This arrangement was based on the condition that the Métis make full payment of their waterfront properties within two years, after which they would receive full patent to the 160-acre parcel. Street's plan was a change from the original provision that allowed those that already occupied their property to receive title to that property if not more than 160 or 240 acres dependent upon where the individual was a head of family or child of a head of family. If less than the appropriate 160 or 240, they were to receive the difference in scrip. This proposal, Street argued, would apply to only a few cases, and in each case, the acreage was small.[39] It obtained approval on the condition that area of these parcels not exceed 40 acres.[40] Street's offer was satisfactory to the Métis as it represented a reasonable accommodation allowing Métis to keep their waterfront parcels and access the full amount of their scrip entitlement.

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[37] Commission W.P. Street to Sir David Macpherson, Minister of the Interior, 6 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[38] David Macpherson to W.P. Street, April 10, 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[39] David Macpherson to W.P. Street, 11 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.

[40] David Macpherson to W.P. Street, 13 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.; Order in Council 1885-0821, 30 March 1885, Series A-1-d, Volume 2769, RG2, Privy Council Office, Series A-1-a. Library and Archives Canada.

The First Sitting of the NWHB Claims Commission, Fort Qu'Appelle

With Qu'Appelle Métis concerns initially alleviated, the Commission began its work in Fort Qu'Appelle on the morning of Thursday 9 April. Upon invitation from Father Hugonnard, the Roman Catholic Priest for the Lebret Mission, the Commission held its first sitting at the Qu'Appelle Industrial School. Hugonnard had a close and trusting relationship with the local Métis which the Commission understood and utilized. They willingly accepted Hugonnard's offer as it "readily brought [the Commission] into the midst of the half-breed settlement."[41] That morning, Métis families from across the region began arriving at the school. At first unwilling or uncertain about appearing before the Commissioners, it was not until Father Hugonnard spoke with the Métis that their apprehension was relieved. By late morning, Hugonnard came before the Commission with an elderly Métis woman, "almost pushing her into the room saying that she wanted to claim her scrip." Street recalled, that "with much hesitation and many evident misgivings" the woman, Madeleine Hamelin, presented herself to the Commissioners, providing the necessary details for her claim. Born at St. Boniface in 1840, she was the daughter of Bonhomme Hamelin and Marie Allary. In 1861, she married Joseph Amyot at St. Josephs, Dakota Territory and by 1865, they were living at Wood Mountain.[42] By 1870, they lived in the Qu'Appelle Valley region on a year-round basis. Amyot died only days before Hamelin appeared before the Commission.[43] When she had finished making her declaration, two witnesses who Street described as "equally reluctant and suspicious," took an oath and verified the details of her claim.[44] The witnesses, Baptiste Dauphinais and Antoine Hamelin, were also witnesses to Amyot's burial.[45] When she completed her application, she received $160 scrip as head of her family. When she left the room, a small crowd of Métis gathered around her, seemingly unhappy that she had participated in the process. Charles Alloway, an agent for a Winnipeg banker, approached Hamelin

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[41] Street, "Commission,"49.
[42] Madeleine Hamelin, Scrip Claim 13, Vol. 1328, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14939, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Deparment of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Isadore Amiot, Scrip Claim 77, Vol. 1325, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14936, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Deparment of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[43] Madeleine Hamelin, Scrip Claim 13, Vol. 1328, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14939, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Deparment of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[44] Street, "Commission,"49.
[45] Joseph Amyot, deceased 5 April 1885, M-8450-463 – Lebret Parish Records, Vol. II. 1881-1887, Register of St. Florent Mission of Qu'Appelle Lake, Saskatchewan, Glenbow Archives.

eager to purchase her scrip. She sold the scrip certificate for $80. Undoubtedly, selling her scrip to Alloway provided a desirable cash infusion for the elderly woman whose husband had just passed away. According to Street, the news quickly spread that the Commission was handing out certificates readily converted into cash and from that point, they were "besieged from morning till night by applicants."[46]

During the sitting at Fort Qu'Appelle, the North-West Half-Breed Scrip Commission approved 238 applications. Of these, 183 were to heads of families and their children and 55 to deceased heads of families and their children. At least twenty-six of those that presented themselves during the first sitting in early April asked for land scrip. However, in the short time between their request and the approval of their claim, claimants changed their minds, asking for money rather than land scrip. In the days that followed, other Métis followed suit. To the surprise of Government officials, of the 168 children who were entitled to take land scrip, all but three took money scrip.[47] Deputy Minister Burgess was particularly surprised to learn that all but a few took money scrip, particularly after the Qu'Appelle Métis initially refused to deal with the Commission unless they were authorized to grant scrip certificates for land.[48]

It is unclear why these individuals changed their minds after community leaders so vehemently advocated for land scrip. Present at the Commission sitting, T.W. Jackson reasoned that the Métis took money scrip because of their loyalty to Riel and those fighting in the Batoche region.[49] In a public address describing his presence at the Scrip Commission, Jackson stated that he counselled the Métis on the importance of land and encouraged them to take land scrip. According to Jackson, about 70 percent of scrip applicants on the first day asked for land scrip rather than money. They changed their

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[46] Street, "Commission,"50.
[47] Schedule showing the number of Half-Breeds, &c., who proved their claims before the North-West Half-Breed Commission, at the several places where the said Commission held its sittings, 23 March 1885, No. 45, Department of the Interior Annual Return for 1885, *Canada Sessional Paper*s, 1886. The number of Métis who proved their claims at Fort Qu'Appelle was 183, including: 48 Half-Breed Heads of Families, of which 27 were male and 21 females; and, 135 Children of Half-Breed Heads of Families, of which 80 were male and 55 females. In addition, claims were also proven for: 22 Deceased Half-Breed Heads of Families (14 male, 8 female); and 33 (21 male, 11 female) Deceased Children of Half-Breed Heads of Families who were living on the 15 July 1870.
[48] A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Report of the North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, No. 8, Department of the Interior Annual Return for 1885, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1886.
[49] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* January 21, 1886.

minds after hearing rumors from Riel and the Métis along the South Saskatchewan that they were to be victorious. Rumors of a Métis victory cautioned Qu'Appelle Métis to not take land scrip, but to accept money scrip, and purchase what they needed as "the land would ultimately belong to them."[50] The timing and the collective nature of the decision to take money scrip speaks to the fierce nationalism maintained by these families in support of their friends and relatives fighting in the Batoche Resistance and their confidence that the Métis would be victorious.[51] A victory at Batoche would have guaranteed Métis land rights, and would have eliminated the necessity of land scrip to secure individual lands.

The decision to cash out their scrip quickly, hoping to hold on to land by means of victory at Batoche, was a risky gamble that played into the hands of land speculators eager to purchase up discounted scrip. More likely, the decision to take money scrip, rather than land scrip was a response to the economic condition families found themselves in. Selling their scrip provided Métis with immediate cash they could use to pay off debts to local merchants or to purchase necessary food and supplies. For many, they required immediate and practical solutions to their circumstances, which selling their scrip could provide. Even though their leaders may have advocated for scrip to secure long-term gain, many simply and practically could not see further than their immediate future.

Lands Patented prior to Scrip – Dealing with Waterfront Properties

Given that many of the Métis already held patent to their lands as settlers under homestead policy, the original scrip provision guaranteed that claimants with patented land would receive less than what was defined in policy. Métis leaders advocated for change to this provision, and instead had the option of purchasing their small water frontages at one dollar per acre and receive scrip equivalent to 160 acres, which they could use to select from lands open for homestead. Conditions on the purchase of waterfront properties limited the area of land to less than 40 acres, and provisions required payment within two years. Once the claimant made payment in full, they

[50] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* January 21, 1886.
[51] T.W. Jackson, "Mr. Jackson on Indian and Half-Breed Matters, *Vidette,* January 21, 1886.

received patent for the additional scrip land. The Minister had agreed to this provision because there were only a few cases in which this would be an issue.[52] In total, there were at least 14 cases dealt with including those of John Simpson, Antoine Hamelin and Simon Blondeau (Table 7.2).[53]

Scrip issued to holders of waterfront claims		
Claim Number	Claimant	Scrip Amount
50	Marie Klyne	$34.00
148	Simon Blondeau Jr.	$59.60
150	Napoleon Hamelin	$132.00
172	Antoine Hamelin	$40.00
177	Norbert Welsh	$116.00
178	Alex Fisher	$80.00
179	Francois St. Denis	$110.00
180	Alphonse Martin	$29.69
1487	Louis Flammand	$152.00
1527	John Fisher	$48.00
1554	Antoine Larocque	$80.00
1559	Gabriel Fisher	$64.41
1560	Baptiste Desjarlais	$20.58
1561	John Simpson	$147.46

Table 7.2: Scrip issued to holders of waterfront claims

In the Spring of 1875, John Simpson and wife Catherine Robillard took up year-round residence on a narrow lake front property on the south side of the lakes, but had lived in the region since at least 1869.[54] The son of Thomas Simpson and Jane Sutherland, John Simpson was born in Red River in 1833 and lived in the North-West Territories since childhood. He entered the service of the HBC in 1849 as a boatbuilder and carpenter at Cumberland House, then at Norway House, Fort Garry, and Fort Pelly. In 1871-72, he was engaged as a carpenter at Fort Qu'Appelle.[55] Simpson's property,

[52] D.L. Macpherson, Minister of the Interior to W.P. Street, Commissioner, 10 April 1885, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[53] List of Scrip issues to holders of waterfronts, 1885, Jean Baptiste Dauphinais, File No. 97132, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[54] John Simpson, Application for Patent, File 290.25, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; John Simpson, Scrip Claim 163, Vol. 1332. RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14941, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[55] John Simpson, Biolgraphical Sheets, Hudson's Bay Company Archives. https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/archives/hbca/biographical/s/simpson_john.pdf

when surveyed in 1881, measured less than 8 acres, but crossed six quarter sections (Table 7.3 and Figure 7.1). In 1884 he registered his existing claim on SW23-12-14 where his home and outbuildings were located. His scrip declaration reveals his reason for taking up residence and building his home in this specific location. In his words, he "took up residence and built [his] house on the lake shore thinking [he]would be allowed to keep [his] narrow lake front and have [his] land given [him] behind for agricultural purposes as was allowed in the province of Manitoba."[56] By the time he received patent for his land, Simpson and his family had made significant improvements to the land. In addition to their home, which measured less than 500 square feet, he had built a stable and fenced his property, as well as breaking and farming two acres of land. When surveyed, their land location became the fractional quarter section 23 Township 21 Range 14, a plot of land equivalent to 12.54 acres. When applying for scrip, he agreed to pay $1.00 per acre for each of his original 12.54 acres within two years and requested scrip of $160 which he could redeem for 160 acres. Rather than paying the $12.54 within two years, he asked to reduce his scrip from $160 to $147.46.[57]

Location	Size
NE 10-21-14	.28 acres
NW 14-21-14	.64 acres
SE 15-21-14	2.85 acres
NE 15-21-14	.31 acres
SE 22-21-14	2.79 acres
SW 23-21-14	.77
Total	7.64 acres

Table 7.3: John Simpson existing claims, surveyed in 1881[58]

[56] John Simpson, Scrip Declaration, Claim 1561, 14 April 1885. Vol. 1332, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14941, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[57] John Simpson, Scrip Declaration, Claim 1561, 20 August 1885. Vol. 1332, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14941, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[58] T.R. Hewson, Dominion Land Surveyor to the Minister of the Interior, Report on the Survey of Claims, May 1881, Survey Files. No. 226. Department of the Interior, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

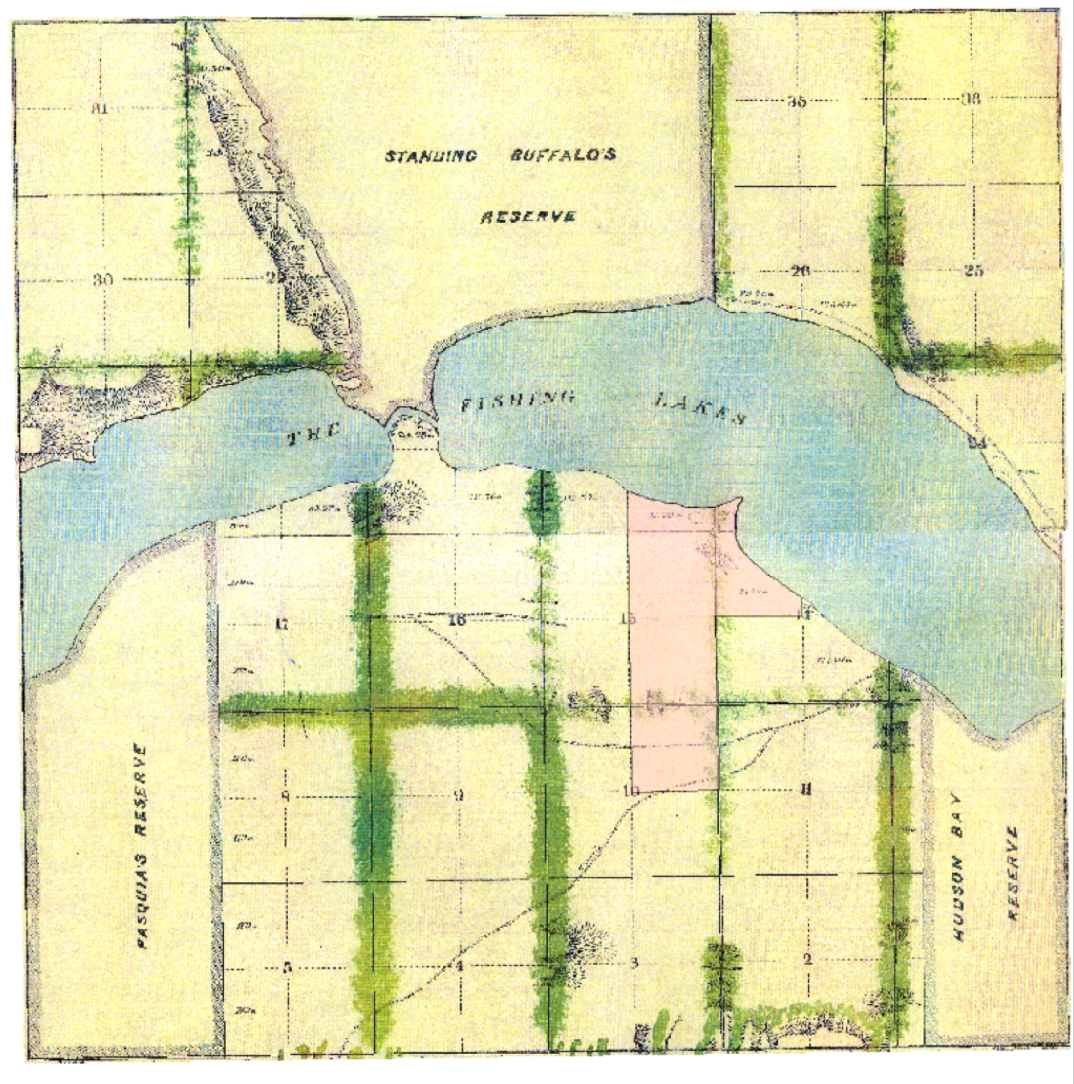

Figure 7.1: John Simpson waterfront claim crossing six quarter sections[59]

Like Simpson, Antoine Hamelin also agreed to purchase his waterfront claim and made a claim for a homestead of 160 acres on payment of $25 (Figure 7.2). He occupied 132 acres but was only able to farm 25 acres. The remainder was hillside and not fit for cultivation. In 1880, he settled on land that became NE 17-21-12-W2, having purchased the property from another occupant for $575. According to his scrip declaration, he occupied a portion of flat land fronting the lake expecting to be able to obtain a grant of

[59] Township Plan, 1883. Township 21, Range 14 West of Second Meridian. Dominion Lands Survey Maps, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

land ten chains wide, running back from the lake and extending beyond the Valley hillside up onto the flat land at the top of the Valley. He purchased the land believing he was purchasing a claim like the water front parcels allowed in Manitoba. The Survey located some of his land and improvements on the adjoining section 20, which forced him to abandon them. He received patent in 1884, at the time having two houses, two stables and a storehouse on the property. At the time he applied for patent, he had 15 of the 25 acres under cultivation.[60] In April 1885, arguing that he would be unable to make enough to support himself and his family off the small acreage, he asked for scrip land of 160 acres upon payment of $25.[61] In November that year, he exchanged his scrip and made an application for entry on a parcel of land at St. Delphine, north of the Qu'Appelle Valley on NE 10-25-12-W2.[62] Despite his insistence he was poor, Hamelin was seemingly more affluent than many of the Métis families in the Qu'Appelle Valley or at St. Delphine. By 1886, he was farming close to 25 acres, and had at least six horses, eight cattle and six pigs on his farm at St. Delphine. Three years later, Hamelin had close to 30 head of cattle.[63]

[60] Antoine Hamelin, Application for Patent, June 4, 1884, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, File 290.31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[61] Antoine Hamelin, Scrip Declaration, Claim 172, Vol. 1328, RG15-D-II-8-b, C-14939, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[62] Antoine Hamelin, Affidavit, November 1885, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, File 250503, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[63] Antoine Hamelin, Affidavit, November 1885, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, File 250503, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

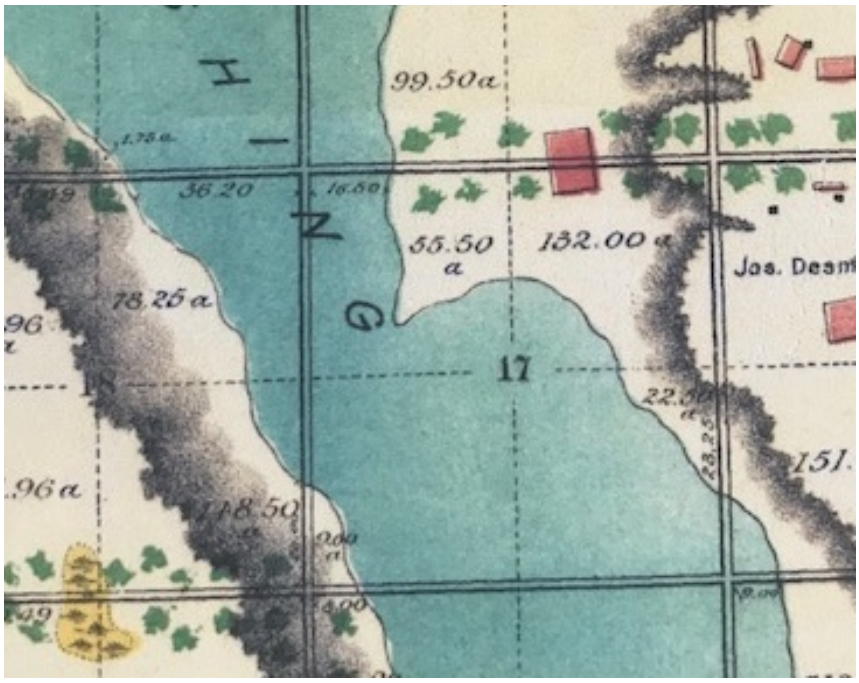

Figure 7.2: Antoine Hamelin's waterfront claim (NE 17-20-12-W2)[64]

In 1884, Blondeau and his wife Francoise Desjarlais received patent for a fractional quarter section on Section 3-21-13-W2, but by that time had been living on the property for nearly twenty years. At the time of patent, he had built a house measuring 400 square feet, a stable measuring close to the same, and a 12 X 12-foot storehouse. He also was farming 15 acres.[65] The land he owned measured 100.40 acres. Scrip provisions entitled him to receive $160 scrip, redeemable for land. When he applied for scrip, he requested scrip in the amount of $59.60 as compensation for the difference between the amount of his patented land and 160 acres.[66] He offered to make payment of $1 per acre for the 100.40 acres within the two-year time frame so that he might obtain an additional free grant of 160 acres of land as a homestead in addition to his $160 scrip entitlement. He asked for this land to be as near his current residence as possible. The Commissioners, however, did not have the authority to grant Blondeau's request because it was above the 40-acre waterfront criteria. Rather, they only had the authority to give him $59.60 scrip

[64] Township Plan, Township 20, Range 12 West of Second Meridian. Dominion Lands Survey Maps, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[65] Simon Blondeau, Application for Patent, File 290.22, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[66] Simon Blondeau, Scrip Claim 2 and 148, Vol. 1325, RG15-D-II-8-b, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

which he could redeem for land. When explained to him that he would receive patent to this land without payment, the Scrip Commissioner recorded Blondeau's satisfaction with the agreement. For his scrip, he received only $59.40 redeemable for land, not his $160 entitlement. Considering he already had patent to his fractional quarter section of 100.40 acres, his scrip amount topped him up to 160 acres, equivalent to that a homestead quarter section. To that end, Blondeau did not benefit from scrip to the extent that he should have, and yet, the Scrip Commissioners noted his approval. A translator communicated this matter to Blondeau which may have created misunderstanding and confusion during the transaction. Blondeau, being one of the community's leaders, advocates and signatories of previous petitions, would likely have recognized the shortfall in his scrip claim. Blondeau's wife, Francoise Desjarlais also received scrip. She withdrew from Treaty in 1882, and took scrip when it became available. In addition, five of their children asked for land scrip, and then changed their minds, instead taking money scrip. Sometime before 1906, Blondeau made entry on SW 14-25-12-W2 in the settlement of St. Delphine. He never lived on the property, but left it to his son Pierre when he passed away in 1906. In his will, he left his original property on 3-21-13-W2 to his daughter Melanie.[67]

Withdrawing from Treaty, Taking Scrip

As the Scrip Commission wrapped up its first sitting in 1885, Chief Commissioner Street became increasingly concerned with the number of Métis registered as Treaty Indians, who appeared before them wishing to leave treaty and take scrip. Like Métis entry into treaty, withdrawal would prove complicated. Changing definitions of who was, or was not an "Indian" under the Indian Act remained significant for Métis. In 1876, the definition of "Indian" in Indian Act amendments became more explicit, with a clear distinction between who was considered Indian or Half-Breed. According to the Act, the term Indian referred to "First, any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; Second, any child of such person; Third, any woman who is or was

[67] Simon Blondeau, Last Will and Testament, 20 October 1906, M. Blondeau, File 521351, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

lawfully married to such person."[68] In addition, the Act included a clear definition of who qualified as a Half-breed, thus not eligible for treaty. Accordingly,

> No half-breed in Manitoba who has shared in the distribution of half-breed lands shall be accounted an Indian; and that no half-breed head of a family (except the widow of an Indian, or a half-breed who has already been admitted into a treaty), shall, unless under very special circumstances, to be determined by the Superintendent-General or his agent, be accounted an Indian, or entitled to be admitted into any Indian treaty.[69]

Accessing scrip disqualified Métis from definition as an Indian and entry into Treaty. For heads of families, only under very special circumstances did the Superintendent-General accept them as Indian and allow entrance into treaty. These cases were to be adjudicated on an individual case by case basis. The intent of this amendment was to clarify where the Métis fit within treaty, but by 1878, Lieutenant Governor and Indian Superintendent, David Laird, remained challenged in "distinguishing certain half-breeds, who have adopted Indian habits, from full-blooded Indians."[70]

Melanie Niemi-Bohum argues that many Métis took treaty because they had few options for legal classification in the North-West Territories.[71] It was not until 1885 when scrip extended into the North-West Territories that Government recognized a legal classification for Métis. In the 1870s scrip did not apply outside Manitoba, so taking treaty, if they were eligible offered some security for individuals and families. As a result, many took treaty rather than taking a chance on the possibility of receiving scrip in the future.[72] However, once scrip extended into the North-West, Métis on the treaty paylists eagerly looked to withdraw and access their long-awaited scrip entitlement.

The sheer number of applicants appearing before the Commissioners caused concern for the Commissioners, unprepared to act on Métis requests. Niemi-Bohum argues that, realizing the absence of policy to deal with this issue, the Scrip

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[68] Indian Act 1876, Cap 18, Sec. 3, sub-Sec. 3.
[69] Indian Act 1876, Cap 18, Sec. 3, sub-Sec. 3(e).
[70] David Laird to the Minister of Interior, 15 November 1878, Papers and correspondence in connecton with half-breed claims and other matters relating to the North-West Territories, No.116e, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1885.
[71] Melanie Niemi-Bohum, "Colonial Categories and Familial Responses to Treaty and Métis Scrip Policy: The 'Edmonton and District Stragglers,' 1870-1888," *Canadian Historical Review* 90, 1 (March 2009): 71-98.
[72] Niemi-Bohum, "Colonial Categories."

Commissioners requested guidance from the Minister. Receiving little support, Street decided to accept scrip applications from women under treaty provided they indicated their desire to withdraw. He forwarded their applications to the Minister with specific questions about each of their cases. Deputy Minister Burgess responded, requesting an investigation into the Indian Act for clarification.[73]

The Indian Act, 1876 clarified Métis admittance into treaty, but it did not include provisions for their removal. In 1879, further revisions to the Act revealed policy maker's desire to remove Métis from treaty.[74] Added clauses outlined the process for discharge from treaty, including the requirement that the individual refund all annuity money they had received. They could repay this debt through a reduction in the quantity of land or money scrip received.[75] Five years later, Indian Act amendments eliminated the repayment clause signaling a clear commitment on behalf of the Government to encourage Métis to withdraw from treaty in favour of taking scrip. Under this revision, for Métis, discharge from Treaty was as easy as signifying in writing one's desire to do so, accompanied two witnesses who swore an oath.[76] These amendments coupled with the decision to issue scrip in 1885 resulted in a flood of applicants requesting removal.[77]

Changes to Indian Act policy allowing for Métis withdrawal served the Government's assimilationist policies intent on reducing the number of treaty Indians and remaking them in the image of white rural farmers.[78] To the Department of Indian Affairs, the Department of the Interior's Scrip Commission represented not only a means to reduce the size of reserve populations but also the required financial resources to maintain them.[79] Discharge alleviated some of the strain on Department of Indian Affairs' budgets in providing food, resources and annuities. Consequently, Indian Affairs promoted treaty withdrawal as an option. In some instances, Heather Devine argues, the decision to leave treaty also resulted in Government coercion, as Indian Agents attempted

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[73] Niemi-Bohum, "Colonial Categories," 80.
[74] Indian Act, 1879, Cap. 34, Sec. 1.
[75] P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs, *Historical Development of the Indian Act* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1978), 76-77.
[76] P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs, *Historical Development*, 76-77.
[77] P.R.E. Group, Indian and Northern Affairs, *Historical Development*, 76-77.
[78] For more on the goals of Canadian Indian Policy see: J.L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *As Long As The Sun Shines and Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies*, ed. Ian. A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (Vancouver: UBC, 1983) 39-55.
[79] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains*, 163.

to induce some individuals labeled "troublemakers" or considered "too-civilized" to withdraw.[80] Regardless, the option to withdraw affected reserve numbers. In the File Hills reserves north of the Qu'Appelle Valley, for instance, withdrawal from treaty under these circumstances resulted in what economist Carl Beal calls a "voluntary exodus" which reduced the reserve population by fifteen percent.[81] Unmistakably, the withdrawal from treaty and movement off-reserve proved to be a cost saving measure for Indian Affairs.[82]

For those leaving treaty, they forfeited all treaty rights, including their homes and rights to any improvements, including cattle and implements, which belonged to the band.[83] In her examination of the Edmonton Stragglers, Niemi-Bohun argues that for Métis withdrawing from Treaty 6 bands, their decision to not remain "Indian" under treaty but withdraw as a "half-breed" implied a refusal of reserve life and the bureaucratically constructed category of Indian.[84] Likewise, James Daschuk, in his study of the impact of government policy on Indigenous health argues that with the creation of the Scrip Commission, Métis made the decision to remove themselves from treaty to free themselves from the restrictive measures of the Indian Act.[85] On reserves, people found themselves bound by the oppressive policies of the Indian Act that regulated everyday life, and food shortages and risk of starvation were a constant threat.[86] This was increasingly a concern after 1885, when Indian Agents regularly cut food rations to those bands deemed rebellious.[87]

The financial benefit and desire in taking scrip also influenced the decisions of many to withdraw from treaty.[88] The recognition and compensation of Métis Indian title

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[80] Devine, *Own Themselves*, 176-178.
[81] Carl Beal "Money, Markets and Economic Development in Saskatchewan Reserve Communities" (PhD diss. University of Manitoba, 1994).
[82] Sawchuk et al., *Métis Land Rights*. Sawchuk et. al. argues that due to their poverty following the provision of scrip there were a number of Métis in the North-West that were subsequently readmitted to treaty on condition that they repay the value of the scrip they received.
[83] Hayter Reed to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, July 26, 1886, File 24303-2A, RG10, Department of Indian Affairs, quoted in: Indian and Northern Affairs, *Admission of Half-Breeds into Treaty* (Ottawa: Treaties and Historical Research Centre, 1976).
[84] Niemi-Bohun, "Colonial Categories,".
[85] Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains.*
[86] Carter, *Lost Harvests*.; Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains.*
[87] Carter, *Lost Harvests*.
[88] Niemi-Bohum, "Colonial Categories,"; Devine, *Own Themselves*, 176-178.

through scrip was something the Métis had advocated passionately for. Consequently, many of those who could, opted out. When the Commission held a sitting in Fort Qu'Appelle in 1886, they approved 100 claims for Métis who had left treaty. Thirty-four of these were heads of families and 66 children.[89] Across the North-West, they allowed 1164 applications for scrip, over half of which were those who withdrew from treaty the previous summer.[90] Opting out of treaty to receive scrip meant the possibility of acquiring their own land and being free from the restrictive measures of reserve life under the Indian Act. However, life off-reserve was only marginally better. Most left treaty with little or no personal property, living with, and relying on relatives and integrating themselves into extended kinship networks. For example, when Julie Martin along with seven of their children and three grandchildren discharged themselves from the Muskowequan Band in the Touchwood Hills, she relied on her extended family in the Qu'Appelle Valley for support. She applied for and received discharge from treaty in late April 1886, but did not receive her scrip for six months.[91] A widow with few options, she relocated from Muskowequan reserve in the Touchwood Hills to live within the cluster of residences along the Fishing Lakes. Close by were her brother, Baptiste Desjarlais, and sisters, Isabelle and Francoise Desjarlais. Four of Francoise's and Simon Blondeau's son Simon Jr., Joseph, Zacharie and Napoleon were also nearby.[92] Living in these intimate family groupings ensured a network of kinship relationships for Martin to rely on as she adjusted to life outside the bounds of Indian Act. It also allowed Métis to adopt or maintain a lifestyle of itinerant farm labour, supplemented by subsistence activity as they attempted to eke out a marginal economic existence.

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[89] Schedule C: Detailed Schedule of Claims preferred before the North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, during the season of 1886, Report Respecting Claims of Half-Breeds, 12 January 1887. No. 7, Department of the Interior Annual Return for 1886, *Canada Sessional Papers,1887.*

[90] Schedule C: Detailed Schedule of Claims preferred before the North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, during the season of 1886, Report Respecting Claims of Half-Breeds, 12 January 1887. No. 7, Department of the Interior Annual Return for 1886, *Canada Sessional Papers,1887.*

[91] Julie Martin, Scrip Certificate and Discharge from Treaty, Vol. 1357, RG15-D-II-8-c, C-14986, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[92] W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

From an economic perspective, allowing Métis off the treaty rolls relieved the Government of ongoing annuity payments in exchange for a one-time grant of land, which it had in abundance. With access to land, Métis were to derive their subsistence from the land, rather than from annuity payments. For many, they exchanged security that was often more theoretical than real, for independence.

Many left treaties thinking they would immediately receive scrip, but for most, like Julie Martin, it was not the case. By late 1886, many in the Qu'Appelle had still not received their scrip and as a result, found themselves vulnerable to merchants and scrip speculators willing to advance credit and goods only until they received their scrip. Those leaving treaty had few options, and at first, sold their scrip to speculators at low prices so they could support themselves and their families. The purchase of scrip in this manner represents one of the breakdowns of the scrip system. By making scrip transferable, the Government opened Métis land up to speculation by extremely eager and successful land buyers, bankers and business men. In many instances, they were able to acquire a power of attorney for individuals and convince them to sell their scrip even before withdrawing from treaty.[93]

By October 1886, many who had left treaty had not yet received their scrip and were in desperate economic circumstances. Eager to receive their certificates, Qu'Appelle Métis petitioned Thomas White, Minister of the Interior.[94] Not only did petitioners demand immediate action on their scrip claims, but that their children, not eligible for scrip receive a $50.00 gratuity in lieu of future treaty annuities they would have received. The petition was signed by 34 heads of families formerly belonging to the Muskowequan, Pasqua, Muscowpetung, Cowessess and O'Soup bands as well as other reserves in the area. [95] Included amongst the petitioners were all but one of Julie Martin's seven children

[93] Report on Half-Breed Scrip, No.7, Department of the Interior Annual Return for 1886, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1887.
[94] T.W. Jackson to Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, Petition signed by 34 Half-Breed heads of families of the Qu'Appelle District who have recently left Treaty with a view to taking Scrip, 16 October 1886, HB8276, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior. Library and Archives Canada.
[95] T.W. Jackson to Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, Petition signed by 34 Half-Breed heads of families of the Qu'Appelle District who have recently left Treaty with a view to taking Scrip, 16 October 1886, HB8276, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior. Library and Archives Canada.

who discharged from treaty in 1886, along with three of her grandchildren.[96] T.W. Jackson, member of the North-West Council and advocate of the Métis, described their poor economic situation, part of which resulted from scrip delay, and stressed the urgency in dealing with their concerns because winter was quickly approaching.[97] As encouragement to quickly settle their scrip claims, he also reminded White of the benefit and long-term cost savings of these individuals no longer being on the treaty rolls.

Before responding, White sought the opinion of the Deputy Minister of the Interior who rejoined that, upon consulting the Indian Act and the Acting Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, there was no foundation for the claim that these children receive such gratuity. White notified the petitioners of the Government's position through Jackson, and the local Qu'Appelle newspaper reported on the results, helping to clarify the situation.[98] The law was clear. There were no provisions requiring the Government to comply with the petitioner's request. However, they did indicate its willingness to consider the issue if claimants could show a precedent.[99] The Minister of the Interior followed the letter of the law, but showed little, if any empathy for the Métis position. As a result, many remained in destitute circumstances, anxiously awaiting their scrip claims and vulnerable to merchants and bankers, eager to buy up their scrip.

Scrip Speculation

The provision of scrip may have provided a short-term benefit to the Métis, but it did little to provide for the long-term. Most often, Métis had few options but to sell because it was the most practical response to their local economic situation.[100] Many were forced to sell so that they could satisfy their immediate needs in feeding their

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[96] Among the signatories to the petition were Julie Martin's sons Joseph, Francois, William, Xavier, Pierre, Cuthbert and daughter Julie Larocque, as well as three of Martin's grandchildren: Pierre Jr, son of Pierre Lemire, and Adelaide and Marie Rose Larocque, daughters of Julie and Baptiste Larocque.
[97] T.W. Jackson to Thomas White, Minister of the Interior, Petition signed by 34 Half-Breed heads of families of the Qu'Appelle District who have recently left Treaty with a view to taking Scrip, 16 October 1886, HB8276, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior. Library and Archives Canada.
[98] A.M. Burgess to Thomas White, Petition signed by 34 Half-Breed heads of families of the Qu'Appelle District who have recently left Treaty with a view to taking Scrip, 2 November 1886, HB8276, Half-Breed Files, 1885-1887, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; "Additional Scrip for Half-Breeds," *Vidette*, January 6, 1887.
[99] "Additional Scrip for Half-Breeds," *Vidette*, January 6, 1887.
[100] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights,*112.

families, or to pay off debts to merchants and businesses who had given them credit or money in advance of scrip. Although speculators offered to purchase scrip certificates at lower than face value, it was cash and it was immediate. There were no administrative delays and its immediacy made it a tempting, if temporary solution, to Métis economic circumstances.

Scrip was well-suited to the quick transfer of land title from one person to another, and according to Sawchuk et. al., it provided an "open invitation to land speculation."[101] This was encouraged by the classification of scrip as either land or money, and the regulations around its dispersal and exchange. Regulations attached to land scrip made it difficult for Métis to take advantage of it, which in turn pushed them to sell. Land scrip certificates were made out in the individual's name and only they could exchange it for land. Land could not legally be assigned to anyone else until it had been issued to the bearer at the Dominion Lands Office. Redeeming scrip required a visit to the Dominion Lands Office which might be far from where they lived, or economically unfeasible to travel to.[102] If they were able to present themselves at a Lands Office, land scrip could only be redeemed for unoccupied surveyed land which might also be far from where they already lived. Moving to such a location was most often not an option because it would mean disruption of extended family groupings and kinship networks. In addition, taking up land for agriculture was not always an attractive option for many Métis engaged in a seasonal semi-migrant economy.[103] Farming was risky and required capital which the Métis did not have. Many did not want to take up land for farming but wished to continue hunting, fishing and harvesting the natural environment, only tilling the soil for their gardens. These regulations and the challenges they posed for Métis in taking up scrip land encouraged a preference for money scrip.

Unlike land scrip, money scrip was not made out to the individual and so was easily transferable. It could be redeemed at the Dominion Lands Office by anyone in possession of a certificate, making it more desirable to speculators than land scrip. This was a critical policy error that served to quickly relieve the Métis of their scrip to the

[101] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights,* 103.
[102] Tough and McGregor, "Rights to the Lands."
[103] Augustus, "The Scrip Solution."

benefit of speculators. If made out in the individual's name it could still be sold because it was considered "personal" property that could be readily sold as the owner wished. Money scrip could then be easily bought and sold with no restriction, unlike land scrip which was considered "real property" or "real estate." Land could not be physically transferred. It was only title to the land could only be transferred and this required administrative registration.

The ease with which money scrip could be bought and sold encouraged a preference among both Métis and speculators for this type of scrip. It also motivated speculators to offer higher prices for money scrip.[104] Acquiring land scrip was time-consuming and often difficult, but not unattainable. Money scrip was preferred, but speculators found ways to also benefit from land scrip speculation. Scrip regulation not only encouraged speculation but also emboldened speculators to commit forgery, fraud and impersonation.[105] Speculators maneuvered around regulatory issues by acquiring power of attorney and acting as an agent for the claimants. In some instances, negotiations were done prior to the individual even applying for scrip. At other times, speculators paid local Indigenous people to fraudulently pose as those named on the scrip certificate, visit the Dominion Lands Office and redeem the scrip certificates.

Sawchuk et.al. argue that Government not only had knowledge of scrip speculation but also assisted speculators.[106] In her examination of the 1885 Scrip Commission, Augustus contends that Government officials were fully aware the extent of scrip speculation and accepted the role of scrip speculators in the process. Even land surveyor William Pearce, she notes, recognized the role of speculators in the provision of scrip.[107] Scrip speculators, like Charles Alloway, carried large amounts of cash and were ready to purchase Métis scrip.[108] Alloway was one of the speculators present at Fort Qu'Appelle sitting in 1885. Speculators were aware of the publicly available hearing

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[104] Gerhard Ens and Joe Sawchuk, *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Métis History and Identity from the Eighteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 160.
[105] Tough and McGregor, "The Rights to Land."; Frank Tough, *As Their Natural Resources Fail: Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996).; Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*.; Ens and Sawchuk, *New Peoples*.
[106] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*, 131.
[107] Augustus, "The Scrip Solution," 102-103.
[108] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*, 131.

schedule and they commonly travelled with the Commission. Scrip speculation became such common practice that the Department of the Interior even created a banking arrangement through the Dominion Lands Office to ease speculators transactions. Through this arrangement, speculators could deposit scrip until they required it for the payment of lands. It was a "most convenient banking arrangement which made the work of the speculators as efficient as possible."[109] Scrip speculation contributed to the creation of a wealthy regional elite and enabled the purchase of large amounts of land by a relative few.[110]

There is no dispute that the Government opened the field to speculation when they created difference between land and money scrip regulations. However, scholars disagree on whether Government acted with benevolence toward Métis interests or with intent to dispossess them of their lands. Scholars such as D.N. Sprague, Ken Hatt and Joe Sawchuk argue that scrip policy was poorly conceived and administered. Regulations aimed at discouraging speculation applied only to land scrip but the trade in money scrip was "wide open." Sawchuk concludes that Government devised money scrip to enable speculation, ensuring that Métis would quickly sell their scrip.[111] The presence of speculators and the ease at which they bought scrip ensured the removal and ultimate dispersal of Métis from their lands. Others, such as Thomas Flanagan and Gerhard Ens contend that Government was well intentioned and attempted in good faith to protect Métis lands. In their opinion, Métis made the rational choice to sell their scrip. However, the decision to sell or not was complicated.

In implementing the scrip system, Government treated Métis according to their different interests. Those who were already property owners with substantial farming investments, those who left treaty to access scrip as half-breeds, and those very poor families all acted and benefited or lost out in different ways. Early in the Commission, the Government worked to accommodate Qu'Appelle Métis, revising policy to accommodate those who owned their properties outright, and those that wished to maintain their small waterfront properties. The Government also found ways to

[109] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*, 136.
[110] Tough, *Natural Resources,* 188.
[111] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights,* 91-92.

implement policy for Métis to withdraw from treaty to take advantage of scrip, albeit to their ultimate benefit by reducing reserve populations and the financial responsibility of Indian Affairs. Ultimately, there were very real weaknesses and failures in scrip policy mainly due to its implementation and the carte blanche speculators had in buying up land.

The 1885 Scrip Commission ran its course, and because of its limited schedule missed numerous individuals and entire communities. In 1886, the Government struck a second Commission with Goulet as the sole Commissioner. The intent of this Commission was to visit communities, including Fort Qu'Appelle hearing from individuals previously missed. A year later, the Government initiated a third Commission with Goulet and Narcisse O. Cote acting as Commissioners. Cote had been as secretary for the two previous two Commissions. These were only three Commissions in a series of many which operated over the course of 21 years to deal with and extinguish Métis claims.[112] Into the early years of the twentieth century, there remained Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley who still had not applied for and received scrip.

Post-1885 Scrip

Not quite a year after the Scrip Commission first visited Qu'Appelle, Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney visited the community inquiring about the Métis widows and orphans that had relocated from the South Saskatchewan River Valley to the Qu'Appelle following the Battle of Batoche. Finding these women and children with very little, Dewdney arranged to give them food and provisions. He also arranged for the men to receive work freighting 600 bags of flour to Batoche. The Métis eagerly accepted the offer of assistance, responding by formally addressing the Lieutenant Governor, welcoming him to the Valley and expressing their loyalty and confidence in him and his administration.[113] Four months later, in June 1886, the Métis again reached out to Dewdney, citing their distress and asking that the Federal Government again provide them with freighting work. Writing on behalf of the Métis, Norbert Welsh argued that the

[112] Sawchuk et. al., *Métis Land Rights*, 118.
[113] "Lieut.-Governor's Visit to Qu'Appelle Half-breeds," *Vidette*, 11 February 1886.

Métis were in a desperate situation, "striving against adversity, and [were] not able, for want of work, to provide themselves with the necessities of life."[114]

Dewdney was slow to act on the Métis request. Forwarding it to the Minister of the Interior before taking any action, he requested a study of their economic situation before approving any form of assistance. In early December, W.A. Clark, a local Justice of the Peace, began surveying the Métis settlements along the Qu'Appelle Lakes and at File Hills, north of the Qu'Appelle Valley. Clark, accompanied by Welsh, visited families in the region finding them "happy, healthy and contented, although in poor circumstances, and not very bright prospects for the future."[115] Most, he reported, had horses but were unable to find freighting work with their teams, and so they had little or no potential for supporting themselves and their families besides selling wood, hunting or fishing. Regardless, the Métis remained able and willing to work, should it be available. Indeed, Clark argued, the Métis would prefer working to accepting charity, and if the Government were to provide such work, the Métis "should be compelled to earn what they get" in order to quell any discontent Government intervention might cause amongst settlers.[116] Upon receiving Clark's report, Dewdney refused help to the Métis, reporting to the Department of the Interior that "although one or two instances of individual distress may exist, there [was] no general destitution prevailing in the District."[117] In fact, he argued, some, such as Welsh, were even in "fairly comfortable circumstances."[118]

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[114] Norbert Welsh to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, 14 June 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[115] W.A. Clark to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, 3 December 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[116] W.A. Clark to Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney, 3 December 1886, File No. 118650, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[117] Amédée Forget, Clerk of Council to A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 24 June 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[118] Amédée Forget, Clerk of Council to A.M. Burgess, Deputy Minister of the Interior, 24 June 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

According to Dewdney, the Métis were not impoverished enough that they required government intervention in the form of employment. With no reprieve available from the Lieutenant Governor or the Department of the Interior, the Métis continued to do what they could to support themselves and their families, taking work when and where it was available.

Despite Dewdney's opinion, Clark's report painted a grim but seemingly accurate portrayal of the economic situation of the Métis. He identified 123 Métis households in the Qu'Appelle Region: 85 in the Qu'Appelle Valley and 38 near the File Hills reserves, in the settlement of St. Delphine (Figure 7.3). The movement to St. Delphine was in many ways a response to the dispossession of Métis from their lands in the Qu'Appelle Valley following scrip.[119] There was already a small population of Métis near the File Hills by the mid-1880s, but by the turn of the century the population had grown significantly as families moved from the Qu'Appelle Valley.[120] Sarah Carter argues that the growth of settlement in this region was also due to the establishment of a rail line at the southern end of the File Hills reserves in 1905. This made agriculture in the region potentially more profitable as rail transport would make the movement of grain less expensive.[121] Intent on farming, the Perreault and Hamelin families were some of the first to take up land at St. Delphine, Antoine Hamelin having moved to the region in 1886 after receiving his scrip. One of a handful of Métis able to benefit from scrip, he had purchased his small waterfront property in the Qu'Appelle Valley which he then sold, exchanging his scrip for land at St. Delphine. Antoine's daughter-in-law, Marie Suzanne Beaulieau dit Sinclair also located her scrip at St. Delphine, taking up land with her husband, Albert Hamelin on NW ¼ and W ½ of NE 2-26-13-W2.[122] Her parents also lived in the region.

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[119] Lyle, Dick, *Farmers "Making Good: The Development of Abernathy District, Saskatchewan, 1880-1920 (*Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2008). 18-19.
[120] W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Canada Census Returns 1881, Sub-District H – Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[121] Sarah Carter, "Demonstrating Success: The File Hills Farm Colony," in *Immigration and Settlement, 1870-1939*, ed. Gregory P. Marchildon (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 2009), 241.
[122]Joseph Brunet, File 710304, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Other families from the Qu'Appelle Valley quickly joined the Hamelins and Perreaults, eager to take up homestead near the villages of Ituna and Jasmin. These included the Beaulieau, Blondeau, Bonneau, Boucher, Cardinals, Dauphinais, Desjarlais, Desmarais, Hamelin, Klyne, Laliberte, Larocque, Malbeuf, Pelletier, Perreault, Poitras, Robillard, Ross, St. Denis, and Vallee families. Many of these were second and third generations of those that had first taken up land in the Qu'Appelle Valley. By the early 1900s, relocating to the St. Delphine/File Hills area provided an opportunity for families to take up homestead within familiar territory, and continue to live close to one another in extended family groupings.

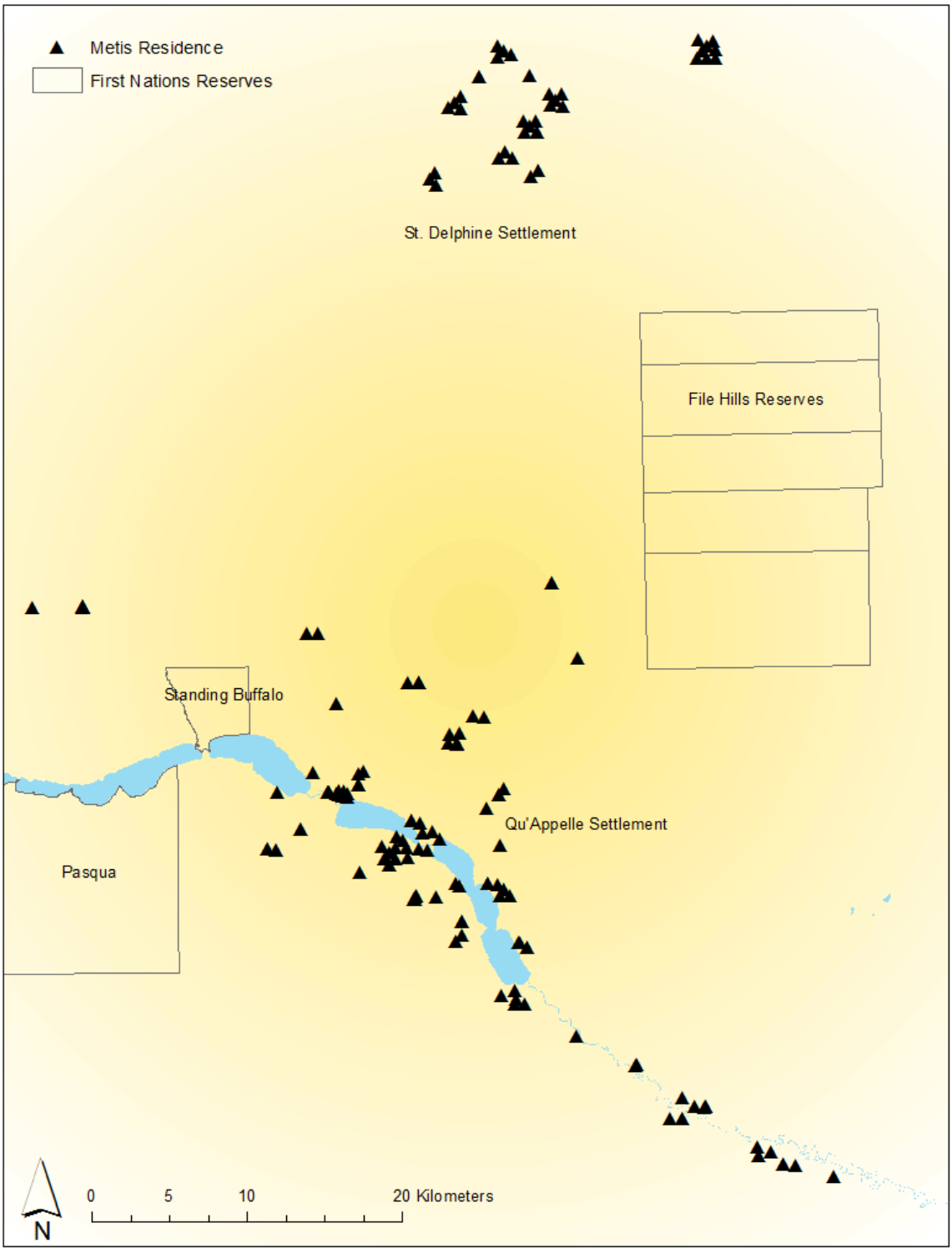

Figure 7.3: Métis identified in Clark Survey, 1886

Applying for Homestead

Some individuals, such as Marie Suzanne Hamelin and her father-in-law Antoine Hamelin, were able to use their scrip to secure land at St. Delphine whereas many more applied for homestead as settlers. Into the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many Métis continued to apply for homestead in St. Delphine and File Hills area and in the Qu'Appelle Valley (Figure 7.4 to 7.7). From the time of survey until 1899, close to 20 Métis made homestead entries in the area and, between 1900 and 1910, more than 110 made entry. In the Qu'Appelle Valley, Métis made more that 40 homestead entries between the time of survey at 1899, and over 140 between 1900 and 1910. After 1910, the numbers significantly dropped. Qu'Appelle Métis made less than 10 homestead entries in the 1910s.

The way in which these families relocated to St. Delphine is an example of how the scrip system and homestead policies did in fact benefit the Métis. They were able to use scrip and homestead policy to relocate and remain in extended family groupings, within familiar territory and in doing so, continue to access necessary environmental resources. By 1912, there was close to 100 Métis families living in the immediate area. Many attempted to farm, but also continued a subsistence economy hunting, fishing and gardening as well as hiring themselves out freighting and working for other farmers. By the end of decade however, most no longer owned land or farmed at St. Delphine.[123] Rather, many had given up and were forced by poverty to sell, returning to the Qu'Appelle Valley where they took up residence on the road allowances along the lakes.

[123] Dick, *Farmers 'Making Good,'* 18-19.

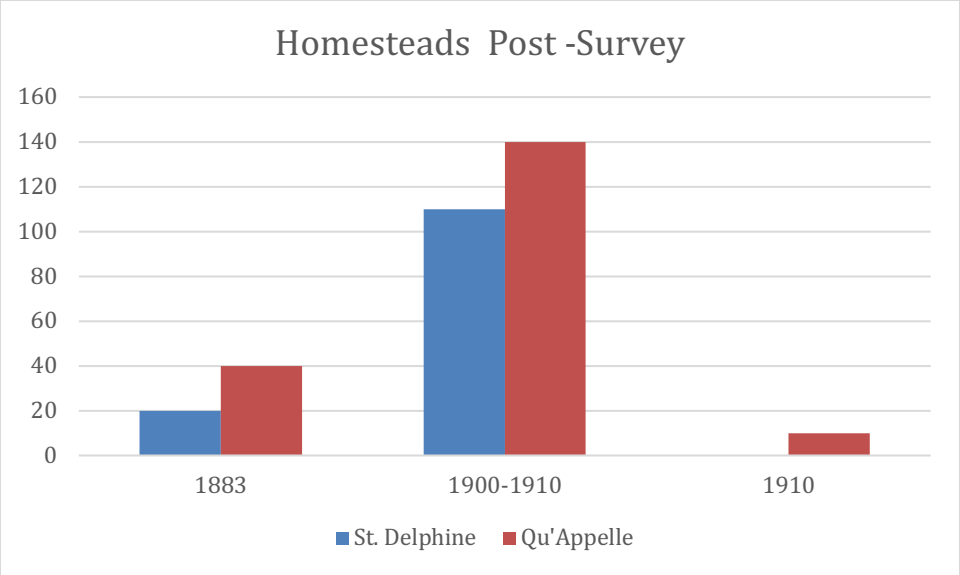

Figure 7.4: Homesteads at St. Delphine/File Hills and Qu'Appelle 1883 to 1910

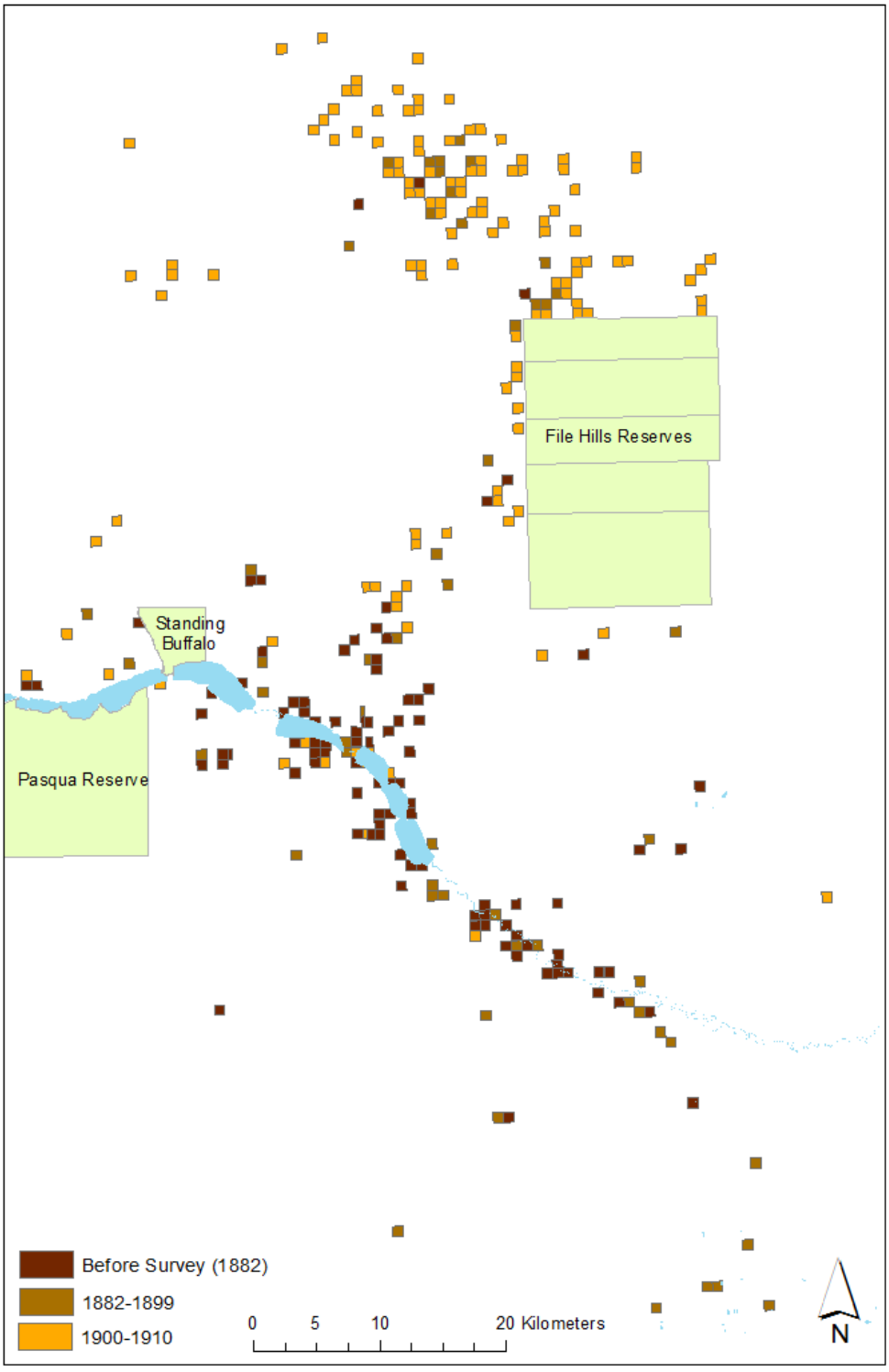

Figure 7.5: Métis Homesteads, Survey to 1910

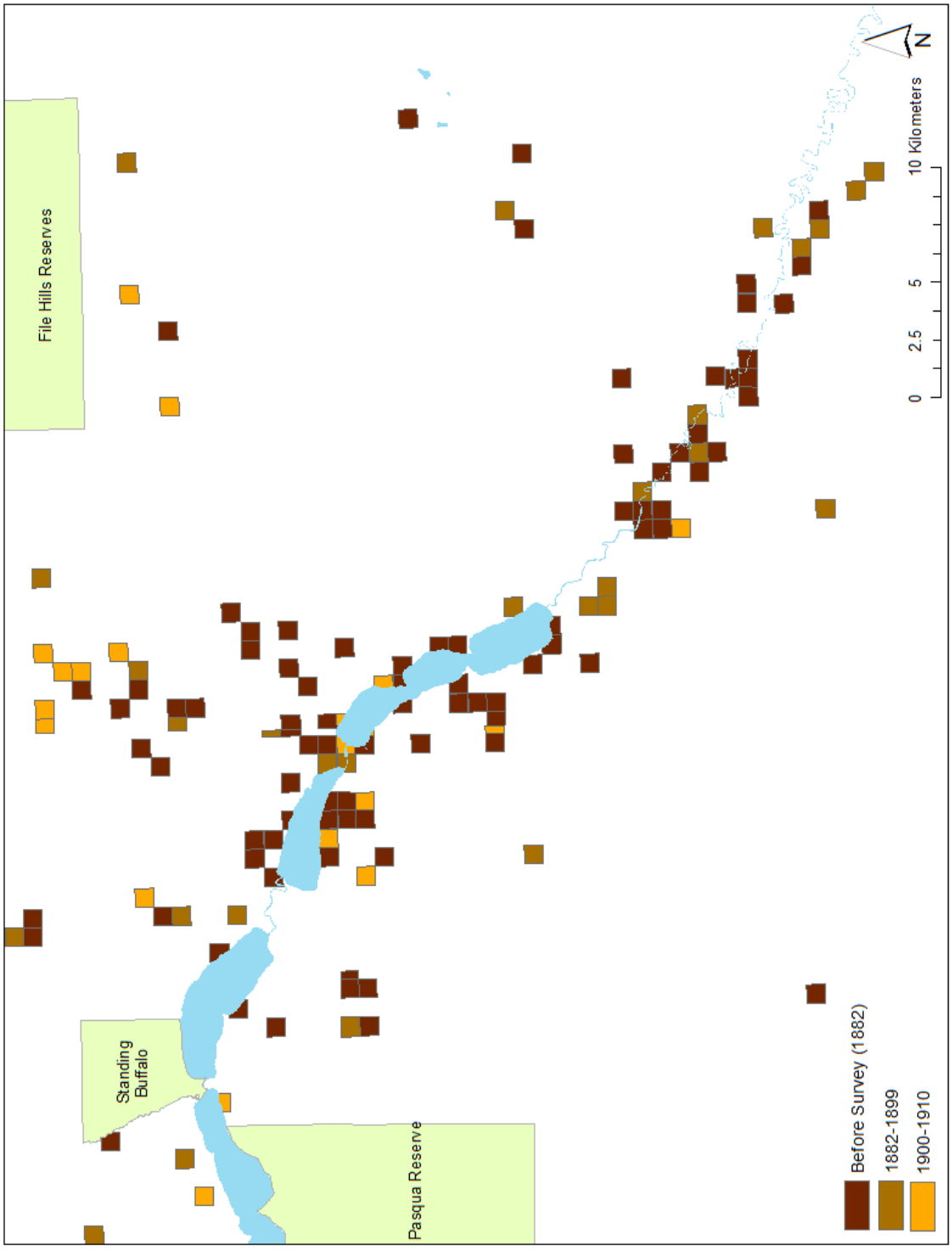

Figure 7.6: Detail, Métis Homesteads, Qu'Appelle Valley, Survey to 1910

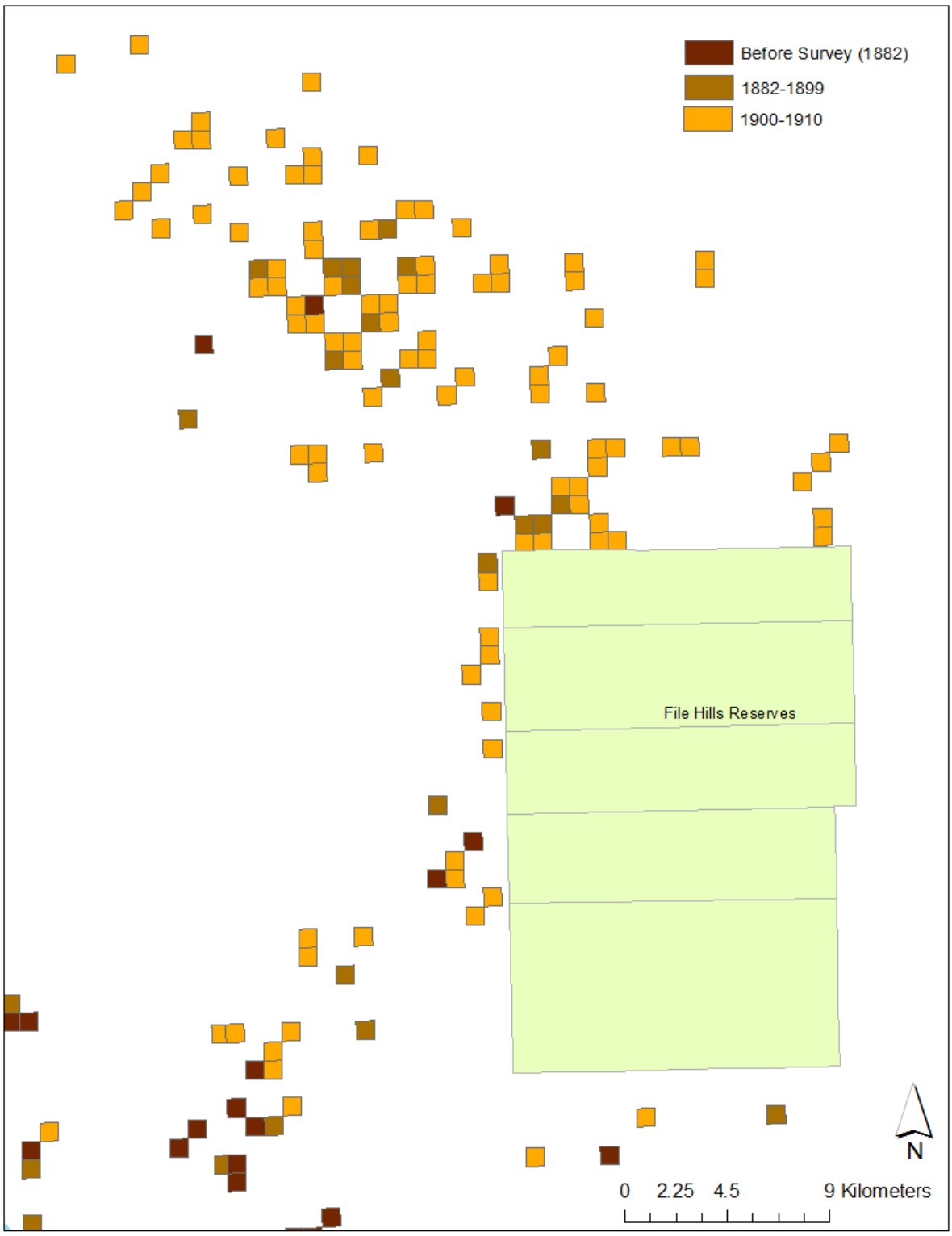

Figure 7.7: Detail, Métis Homesteads, St. Delphine Settlement, Survey to 1910

Homestead policy required that Métis apply as settlers and make necessary improvements to their lands. As a result, even if able to acquire a homestead and attempt to make the transition to agriculture on new plots of land, Métis faced significant barriers in acquiring or holding on to their lands. Among other criteria, they needed to meet a residency clause, demonstrate their intent at being bona fide settlers, and pay the required fees. Whether the Métis met these criteria was often at the discretion of the Homestead Inspector and the local Land Agent.

As part of the requirement for homestead, homesteaders had to maintain a continual residence on the property for six months a year. Homestead Inspectors questioned the intention of Métis such as Joseph Gosselin, John Klyne and Charles Racette to become bona-fide settlers because they lived off their homestead. Métis regularly left their homes for periods of time to find work but also to hunt and fish. They also regularly lived with parents or children for short periods of time, helping when elderly parents were sick or providing extra support in maintaining their small farms. In August 1885, the Homestead Inspector challenged Joseph Gosselin's continual residence on SW6-201-12-W2. At the time of inspection, Gosselin had a log "shanty" and stable built and about seven acres cropped. Despite evidence of occupation, the Homestead Inspector noted the claimant was a half-breed and didn't reside on the property. Instead he speculated that Gosselin lived "most of the time on his brothers homestead." In his sworn statement, Gosselin justified his absence stating that he had been residing on his father's homestead on 8-20-12 W2, helping his father farm. The also worked for other farmers so he could earn enough money to finish building his own home and one for his widowed sister and her family.[124]

Similarly, Homestead Inspectors questioned John Klyne's residency and his suitability as a settler. In August 1885, Klyne made an initial declaration noting he had built a small log cabin, had a few acres cropped and 10 acres of land freshly broken. At the same time, the Homestead Inspector reported evidence of Klyne's frequent but not continual residence, professing that Klyne generally resided with his father and not on his

[124] Homestead Inspector Report to H.H. Smith, Commissioner of Dominion Lands, 15 August 1885, Joseph Gosselin, File 223975, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Joseph Gosselin, Statement, 4 September 1885, File 223975, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

own homestead. He continued, declaring the claimant, being a half-breed Klyne was "a very poor, undesirable settler."[125] The following April, the Dominion Lands Branch notified Klyne that he must be in permanent residence by 1 May, 1886 to comply with the residency clause. The local Agent forwarded Klyne's application for patent to the Dominion Lands Branch in Winnipeg, but it was not until August 1888 that the Land Agent ordered another homestead inspection. This second inspection did not go well. The Office of the Dominion Lands Commissioner informed Klyne that they had refused his application for patent because of the "very unfavourable report" received from the Homestead inspector. The Inspector had visited Klyne's claim in late August and found improvements consisting of about nine acres cropped and six acres of broken ground grown over in weeds. There was also "a small mud and log dwelling worth about $10 and a stable of about the same materials but of no value" on the property. Finding no one in residence, the Commissioner's Office challenged Klyne on the accuracy on his homestead application, questioning if he continually resided on his homestead from April 1884 to July 25, 1888 as indicated on his declaration, or if he lived with his father on another section. Under these circumstances, Klyne would have to make another application for patent when he could show that he had performed the necessary settlement duties. By this report, Klyne was not a bona fide settler, despite his initial claim that he had a few acres cropped and 10 acres freshly broken with the intention to farm.

Like Gosselin and Klyne, Homestead Inspectors also disputed Charles Racette's continual residency. Labeling Racette a "roving halfbreed," the Inspector cancelled his entry for NE 14-22-12-W2 because he was confident that Racette had never settled on the land and that he was not a bona fide settler.[126] Racette, however, made original entry on the land in 1883 and although he had no horses or oxen, he had made necessary improvements, having a mud-plastered log house and five acres of land broken. For each of three years afterward, he had planted a garden and small crop until 1886 when his

[125] Homestead Inspector Report to H.H. Smith, Commissioner Dominion Lands Winnipeg, 14 August 1885, John Klyne, File 901341, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[126] R. Park, Homestead Inspector Report, 17 May 1888, Charles Racette, File 556294, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

crops failed and he moved off the land.[127] The criteria for continual residency, as demonstrated, came into conflict with family responsibilities, the necessity of being away from home working and the nature of Métis economic practices that required being away for periods of time to hunt or fish.

Critical of Métis intent and ability to become farmers, Homestead Inspectors and Lands Agents regularly characterized Métis as not bona fide settlers. They considered individuals such as Napoleon, Zacharie and Jean Blondeau to not be serious farmers, and because they were "Halfbreeds" they were "not likely to succeed."[128] The Homestead Inspector reported that Napoleon Blondeau only had about one acre broken and no house built. Instead he and his family camped on the claim. He believed Blondeau to be frequently absent, and because he was Métis, was "not likely to follow agricultural pursuits to any extent."[129] Blondeau however, argued that due to ill health, he was frequently living close by with his father, Simon.[130] Regardless, the Inspector cancelled his entry because he did not consider Blondeau a desirable settler or serious farmer because he was not endeavoring to improve his homestead.[131] In 1885, he made a second, but unsuccessful attempt, to re-enter his homestead on the same quarter section.[132] The following spring, the land was entered on by Chrysotome Robillard who received patent in 1899.[133] He received patent for the property after the Inspector recorded that Blondeau had been away from the region for some years and had abandoned the property.[134] In 1909, Blondeau made a third attempt at taking up a homestead, making an entry on SE32-20-13-W2 not far from his original parcel. Here, he built a home, two stables, and

[127] H. Rockton, Witness Declaration, 20 July 1889, Charles Racette, File 556294, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[128] Homestead Inspector to Dominion Lands Agent, 5 August 1885, Napoleon Blondeau, File 97893, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[129] Homestead Inspector to Dominion Lands Agent, 5 August 1885, Napoleon Blondeau, File 97893, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[130] Napoleon Blondeau, Statement, 9 July 1884, File 97893, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[131] Homestead Inspector to Dominion Lands Agent, 5 August 5, 1885, Napoleon Blondeau, File 97893, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[132] Chrysotome Robillard, File 481066, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[133] Chrysotome Robilllard, File 481066, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[134] Chrysotome Robillard, Application for Patent, File 481066, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

within the first year he had fifteen acres broken and two acres fenced. Throughout this time, he continued to support himself hunting, fishing, and relying on garden produce as well as taking work freighting when possible. He received patent for this land in 1912.[135]

The Homestead Inspector similarly described Napoleon's brothers Jean and Zacharie. Jean Blondeau took up NE34-20-13-W2 in 1879 before survey. He initially attempted to register his claim in 1884, but made little progress. The reason for this is unclear, but in 1889, he again made application and received approval for patent. Once approved, the Land Agent forwarded Blondeau's approval for patent to the Dominion Lands Office in Winnipeg. A week later, they returned Blondeau's file for reconsideration. The following spring, Winnipeg requested an update on the status of the file, and the local Land Agent ordered an inspection. It was another four months before the Homestead Inspector inspected Blondeau's claim. There is no indication or reason given for the delay. However, at the time of entry, Blondeau had built a home and stable, had fifteen acres broken and had a herd of approximately 20 horses. Despite these improvements and the farm's "neat appearance," the Homestead Inspector still did not believe Blondeau to be serious about farming the land.[136] He did however, approve the patent.

In July 1883, Zacharie Blondeau began the process of registering his claim on SW34-20-13, expecting patent to granted quickly. At the time he had about 6 acres under cultivation and each year he planted a garden with at least a half an acre of onions and potatoes. In addition, he had built a log small house and stable and had purchased a wagon, plough and two horses. He did not received patent immediately, as the Lands Office required the Homestead Inspector inspect his claim. This did not happen until the following summer. In October, fearing cancellation, T.W. Jackson inquired on Blondeau's behalf about the status of his claim. The Land Agent gave no indication about when the Inspection would take place, but reassured Jackson that at present, they would not cancel the claim. The inspection did not take place until August 1885, another nine months later. Following the inspection, the Dominion Lands Branch nor Blondeau took

[135] Napoleon Blondeau, Declaration, 9 June 1909, File 222646, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[136] Homestead Inspectors Report, Jean Blondeau, File 240969, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

any further action on the file until September 1893, when the Land Agents again required Blondeau to prove his case. This required yet another inspection, and in November he made a statutory declaration and provided affidavits from his brother Simon Blondeau and Pierre Desjarlais swearing to his improvements. Upon receipt of this testimony, the Land Agent notified Blondeau that it would be necessary that he increase the amount of land under cultivation and then apply for patent. In July 1895, the Homestead Inspector again inspected Blondeau's claim, looking to ensure that he made the necessary improvements. Satisfied after taking affidavits from two witnesses, he reported that Blondeau must pay an inspection fee before patent approval. Blondeau did not receive patent for another six years, in May 1901.

It took Blondeau close to twenty years to receive patent for his land, and there were arguably significant delays for many other Métis. There is no indication in Blondeau's file why it moved so slowly through Dominion Lands bureaucracy, or why Blondeau did not pursue the matter in a timely fashion. The delay may have resulted from government apathy to deal with the Métis because of the perception they were not, and would not be, serious farmers. With Blondeau's initial inspection in 1884, the Inspector recognized that he did in fact continually reside on his claim and that he had made some improvements. Despite this evidence, the Inspector noted that Blondeau, like his brothers, to not be doing much "to advance the interests of agriculture."[137] Blondeau's inaction in pursuing his claim may have resulted from his inability to make a living farming this particular plot of land. In his declaration, Blondeau lamented the poor quality of the land for farming, stating that, "simply that if it was not for a place to live it would scarcely be worth my while to look after this homestead but by working out I manage to live."[138] Despite improvements and demonstrated commitment to farming, Homestead Inspectors continually questioned Métis residency, their commitment and ability to farm, their mobile nature and the necessity to be off their property.

The extent to which Métis were willing to become farmers, and be successful, was a common concern for Homestead Inspectors. Most did not take up land exclusively

[137] Homestead Inspectors Report, 29 August 1884, Zacharie Blondeau, File 504182, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[138]Zacharie Blondeau, Declaration, 20 November 1893, File 504182, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

for farming, but maintained a mixed economy of small-scale agriculture, hunting and fishing, supplemented by freighting and seasonal employment when available. Even for those who wished to take up farming, their poverty limited their success. For many there was a very practical reason for delays in receiving patent or for the loss of homestead lands. Being poor, many could ill afford to pay the required fees. In July 1884, T.W. Jackson noted in a letter to the Commissioner of the Lands Branch that there were numerous of Métis in the region making requests for extension in paying required entry fees.[139] Jackson pleaded to the Commissioner for leniency on behalf of Eustache Brabant, arguing that he and other Métis were "so poorly off this season," they feared, without the extension that by Spring many would lose their properties to incoming settlers. For many Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley and File Hills, they lost their lands this way while others, like Cuthbert St. Denis, sold when they could no longer afford to farm.[140] By the 1910s, many of the families had moved off their homesteads in the Qu'Appelle Valley or away from St. Delphine returning to the Valley. Whether through the failure of the scrip system or the regulation and administrative process of the homestead policy, at the end of the nineteenth century, Métis who remained in, or returned to the Qu'Appelle Valley had few options. Displaced and dispossessed, for many their only choice was to move to unoccupied Crown land at the edges of each township, or for some, to the road allowances along the Qu'Appelle Lakes.

Conclusion

By 1885, tensions were high in the North-West. On the eve of resistance, both Métis and Government acted. As Louis Riel and his supporters engaged in armed resistance, Government finally implemented a process to deal with Métis title outside of Manitoba. Despite finding themselves even further imbedded in complicated Government bureaucracy and administration, they continued to press their claims, and for recognition of their rights. In meeting with the North-West Half-Breed Scrip Commissioners, Qu'Appelle Métis advocated for changes to the scrip program to suit their needs. Scrip

[139] T.W. Jackson to A. Walsh, Commissioner of Lands Branch, 6 July 1884.Eustache Brabant, File 130220, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[140] Cuthbert St. Denis, File 182988, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

policy amendments demonstrate that some Métis benefited from scrip. The Government amended scrip policy to meet the demands of those with pre-existing or waterfront claims, or those wishing to withdraw from treaty. Métis remained challenged by the pace of scrip distribution and the regulations in place that encouraged scrip speculation. Indeed, the fact that land and money scrip had differing regulations around exchange was a flaw in the system that encouraged the removal of land from the Métis. Lack of regulation around money scrip and the complexity of redeeming land scrip made money scrip the more attractive option for both the Métis and for speculators.

For some Métis, they found a way to make scrip benefit them. Some families reorganized themselves within the Valley environment and in the File Hills region, using scrip to acquire homestead lands. However, even for these industrious families who attempted to take up land for agriculture, land tenure remained tenuous at best as they struggled to hold onto their lands and remained vulnerable to the racism of Dominion Land agents and Government officials. The scrip system aimed to deal with the Métis is a fair and equitable way, yet policy flaws allowed for and encouraged speculation. Policy treated individuals differently and not everyone benefited. Some had the means to use scrip for long-term benefit but the majority had few options except to think about immediate need and sell for a temporary injection of cash.

In effect, scrip did little to change the Métis economic situation. The North-West Half-Breed Scrip policy of the late 1880s, or the subsequent scrip Commissions into the early 1900s, ultimately failed the majority of Métis. Most lost or sold their scrip to speculators for a fraction of its value. The implementation of scrip policy did not consider Métis ways of life or ease an economic transition to agriculture. Instead, most ended up landless. Scrip did not provide the guarantee of Métis land rights that the Qu'Appelle Métis had so vigorously championed for, but that was not its intent. The way Government implemented scrip through the Dominion Lands Act and in tandem with Homestead policy only complicated Métis efforts. As a result, scrip displaced and dispossessed the Métis at the same time, opening the land for orderly agricultural settlement of the North-West.

Chapter Eight: "We Got Our House Built by Seneca Roots": Gendered Labour in the Settler Economy

Throughout the last years of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, prairie Métis earned a meagre, and often sporadic, income picking buffalo bones, freighting and cutting and selling wood. As settlement across the prairie provinces increased, so too did Métis opportunity to provide labour in the developing settler economy. Men found work as seasonal farm labourers, clearing fields, cutting fence pickets, picking rocks and planting and harvesting for local farmers. Employment opportunities were welcomed but brought only a very modest income into the family. Families continued to work as an economic unit with men and women working alongside one another in complementary ways. Women helped men in the fields and maintained responsibilities of caring for the children and old people. Women's labour was crucial as they harvested, prepared, and preserved food and medicines for their families. As men found work with local farmers, women worked as domestics: cooking and cleaning in the homes of their husband's employers. Women also sold beaded, embroidered and other handmade products, helping contribute to the family economy. As a result, Prairie Métis continued to work in gendered and complementary ways as they increasingly became immersed in the growing settler economy.

In her examination of the Batoche community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, former Parks Canada historian Dianne Payment explores Métis efforts to maintain control over their social, political and economic systems within Canadian society after 1885.[1] She argues that prior to 1885 many Métis in the Batoche region cultivated their own plots of land and by the early twentieth century some achieved a degree of success as farmers, ranchers and merchants. Most, however, struggled to adapt to new economic realities and increasingly sought out available labour opportunities. By the 1890s, Batoche men worked for local merchants, the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Hired by local merchants, Métis men worked as labourers, clerks and freighters. Some also took care of their employer's

[1] Payment, "Batoche After 1885," 173-188.; Payment, *Free People.*

horses, gathered and delivered hay, and cut fence poles and pickets.[2] Most often, their employers paid them in goods and merchandise from their stores rather than in cash. The NWMP hired Métis as guides, interpreters and carpenters as well as to supply wood, hay, oats, barley and beef.[3] In addition, the CPR hired Métis labourers to cut and transport railway ties for the construction of the northern railway line from Regina to Prince Albert.[4] Working for the CPR was a short-term, but significant source of income for many. By the turn of the century, many relied almost exclusively on cutting cordwood, freighting, selling fish, collecting and selling seneca roots, carting fieldstones to building sites, picking buffalo bones and the annual deer, duck and prairie chicken hunts to bring a modest income into the family.[5] This work was generally seasonal and not very profitable.

For women, their roles and responsibilities also shifted within the growing agricultural economy.[6] Women, Payment argues, no longer occupied complementary roles created with the harvesting and processing of buffalo, but took on farming tasks such as gardening, milking cows and feeding chickens, and more domestic responsibilities in preparing food, cleaning house, making soap, washing, baking and sewing.[7] These tasks, however, proved indispensable. Following the 1885 Resistance, Batoche women made compensation claims for losses incurred within women's domestic sphere. These claims included restitution for henhouses, milk houses, items from their dowry, and a portion of the household goods, cattle and farm.[8] With the move to agriculture, she contends, there was an increasingly pronounced gendered division of labour where men and boys were responsible for farm work and seasonal labouring jobs that could bring in goods or wages, and women and girls responsible for housekeeping or domestic responsibilities as well as for cultivating vegetable gardens.

Through narratives of eight Métis women, historian Nicole St. Onge examines women's wage labour participation within a rural agrarian economy where women

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[2] Payment, *Free People*, 232.; Payment, "Batoche After 1885," 174-175.
[3] Payment, *Free People*, 217.; Payment, "Batoche After 1885," 174-175.
[4] Payment, *Free People*, 230-232; Payment, "Batoche After 1885," 174-175.
[5] Payment, *Free People*, 230-231.
[6] Payment, *Free People*, 232.
[7] Payment, *Free People*, 232.
[8] Payment, *Free People*.; Payment, "'La vie en rose'?," 30-31.

significantly contributed to supporting their family despite the constraints of class, gender and ethnicity.[9] In St. Eustache, Manitoba, Métis families practiced a mixed economy, working seasonally as agricultural labourers and cutting wood in the winter. Women often worked alongside men in the sugar beet fields during the summer and helped them stook wheat and barley during harvest.[10] According to St. Onge, the only work these women did not engage in was winter wood cutting. Women also worked for farmers as domestics in their homes, or milking cows in their barns. Often young women took work as domestics to support the family and remained working for farmers even after they married. In some instances, Métis families were also able to maintain small farms of their own where they grew a large garden and occasionally pastured a cow. In such cases, women sought to maximize their income by selling garden produce or the products of barnyard animals to their neighbours. Together these activities ensured families were fed.

Similarly, in his study of St. Laurent, Manitoba from 1920-1988, Guy LaVallee identifies a gendered division of labour within the community.[11] In the earlier years of his study period, men were responsible for fishing, trapping, seasonal farm work and digging seneca root. Women were responsible for domestic chores of cooking, cleaning, sewing, and childcare. In the spring however, both men and women tended to large vegetable gardens. In addition, women harvested the natural environment but also helped with farm chores, and occasionally cut and chopped wood when required. Sometimes they found work outside the home, working as domestics, as cooks and maids in the nearby convent or school, or in cleaning cottages around the lake. Before 1950, most jobs were temporary and did not pay enough to support the family and so Métis families continued to rely on garden produce, hunting, fishing, trapping and gathering wild foods.

Across the prairie provinces, Métis increasing engaged in the growing settler economy, taking advantage of available employment opportunities and continuing as they always had to work in complementary and gendered ways. Qu'Appelle Métis immersed themselves in the settler economy in ways consistent with other Métis, doing what they could to earn a living. Qu'Appelle Métis gathered buffalo bones, picked rocks or cut

[9] St. Onge, "Memories,".
[10] St-Onge, "Memories," 62. Stooking grain is a method of harvesting, where cut-grain stalks or sheaves in the field are arranged upright to keep the grain heads off the ground and dry until threshing.
[11] LaVallée, *St. Laurent.*

wood, harvested and sold fish, seneca root and berries, and sold the handmade products of women's labour to support their families and maintain connections to the land. They continued to work in complementary and gendered ways, recognizing that some work required everyone's labour. They lived within a complex barter economy where, as compensation for their labour, they relied upon and received necessary food or supplies that they did not produce themselves.

Picking Buffalo Bones

By the mid 1870s, a market for buffalo bones had emerged in American cities such as Detroit, Chicago and St. Louis, requiring large quantities of buffalo bones used in fertilizer processing plants and in sugar refineries.[12] Growing demand combined with the 1885 completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway across Western Canada ensured economical and efficient shipping of buffalo bones to eastern centres. Taking full advantage of the shifting economy, the Métis once again ventured out onto the plains in search of buffalo. This time, they were not following the herds, but instead harvesting the bleached white bone carcasses left behind over previous decades.

In gathering the bones, Métis worked together in extended family groupings or "bone-picking outfits" much like they had hunted buffalo in extended family buffalo brigades. Engaging in this type of labour also allowed families to continue seasonal movement on to the plains as they had when hunting buffalo, in addition to earning some income to support their families. Men, women and children worked alongside one another, gathering as many bones possible. Not necessarily gendered, the division of labour in picking buffalo bones reflected familiar strategies where all members of the family contributed their labour, ensuring they met necessary labour demands. Gathering and loading the bones into Red River carts, they freighted the bones to merchants and collection deports springing up along the expanding rail lines. Each cart, when packed

[12] Le Roy Barnett, "How Buffalo Bones Became Big Business," *Canadian Geographic Journal*, July/August 1974, 20. For an examination of communal buffalo hunting and the creation of buffalo bone beds, see: Ernest G. Walker, "An Overview of Prehistoric Communal Bison Hunting on the Great Plains," in *Bison and People on the North American Great Plains: A Deep Environmental History*, eds. Geoff Cunfer and Bill Waiser (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2016): 122 -155.

carefully, held between 800 and 1200 pounds of bones and earned approximately three dollars ($3.00) per load.[13]

The trade in buffalo bones provided a transitional, short-lived but essential economic opportunity for the Métis. Although prices fluctuated, buffalo bone pickers generally earned anywhere between $5.00 to $8.50 dollars per tonne.[14] In 1882 and 1888, Métis trader and merchant Jean-Louis Legare of Willowbunch paid collectors $6.00 to $6.50 per tonne for the approximately 30,000 tonnes he purchased, whereas in 1889, bone pickers from the Qu'Appelle Valley received upwards of $7.00 per tonne.[15] In 1892, Saskatoon merchants increased their rate from $5.50 to $7.00 per tonne to $6.00 to $8.00 in order to attract business and remain competitive, but also to compensate bone pickers for the increasing distance required to pick bones further afield from the merchants and the rail depot.[16] A year later, they again increased their prices. This time priced increased from $6.50 to $8.50 per tonne.[17]

By 1890, as rail lines extended from Regina north toward Saskatoon, bone pickers quickly gathered along the right-of way, harvesting the remnants of the herd. By August that year, bone pickers gathered more than $7000.00 worth of bones throughout the Qu'Appelle region and transported them to the side of the rail lines between Lumsden and the end of the line.[18] The same year, bone pickers, including Métis from north central Saskatchewan and the South Saskatchewan River region delivered as many as 50,000 buffalo skulls to Saskatoon together with as many of the other bones they could find.[19] In 1890-91, the quantity of bones shipped out of Saskatoon was equal to that of over 200,000 buffalo. In 1894 and 1897, the total weight of buffalo bones shipped out of Western Canada was over 22,000 tonnes.

Unmistakably, the trade in buffalo bones was lucrative, at least for a short period of time. The volume of bones delivered to merchants however, quickly outpaced the

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[13] Barnett, "Big Business," 22-23.
[14] Michel Hogue, *Métis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2015), 176.
[15] Barry Potyondi, *In Palliser's Triangle: Living in the Grasslands, 1850-1930* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1995), 35-36. ; "Communications," *Vidette*, 11 July 1889.
[16] Barnett, "Big Business," 24-25.
[17] Barnett, "Big Business," 24-25.
[18] Barnett, "Big Business," 21.
[19] Barnett, "Big Business," 21.

railroad's shipping capacity, forcing merchants and railways to stockpile their investments along the rail lines waiting shipment out of the west. Often, merchants and rail line workers stacked the buffalo bones in the shape and size of the railcars, as seen below (Figure 8.1). Over a three-year period from 1890 to 1893, one Saskatoon merchant shipped 750 railcars loaded with bones, with other Saskatoon merchants accounting for 2500 railcar loads. Each car held approximately 12 tonnes of bones, representing more than 1.5 million buffalo.[20]

Figure 8.1: Buffalo bones at Saskatoon, 1890s[21]

For their labour, local merchants such as Legare, paid buffalo bone pickers with goods or cash. Joe Blondeau recollected stories of buffalo bone picking he heard as a child. Blondeau's grandfather picked buffalo bones throughout the Qu'Appelle Valley region and hauled them to Regina where he traded them in exchange for beef to feed his

[20] Barnett, "Big Business," 25.
[21] Buffalo Bones at Saskatoon [1890s], LH-2822, Saskatoon Public Library.

family.[22] Similarly, Saskatoon merchant W.H. Duncan regularly offered goods in trade for the collected bones, which the Métis, familiar with this type of exchange, readily accepted.[23] Acting as a middle man between producer and purchaser, merchants handled the bones and transported them to the rail line or local depot for sale. These merchants benefitted financially from Métis labour. Buffalo bone picking provided invaluable economic opportunity for both the Métis and local merchants, but was short-lived. By the end of the 1890s, the last remnants of the great buffalo herds had once more disappeared from the western plains.

Itinerant Temporary and Seasonal Labour

As economic opportunity picking buffalo bones ended, Métis increasingly sought out agricultural work. In the early to mid-twentieth century, working for local farmers was a significant source of support for Métis families. In speaking about growing up in the Qu'Appelle Valley, Celina Amyotte Poitras recalled that working for farmers was how many families survived.[24] Métis men regularly worked for local farmers on a seasonal or short-term temporary basis, finding work by the job or by the day, week, month or season. In many instances, farmers employed the same men seasonally in consecutive years. Métis men worked picking rocks and clearing fields, planting and harvesting crops, gathering hay, tending livestock, fencing and cutting cord wood and fence pickets. John Joe Larcoque, a member of one of the very few affluent Métis farm families in the Qu'Appelle region, recalled that his father often hired Métis men on a temporary or short-term basis when large amounts of labour were necessary. According to Larocque, his dad hired male labourers to cut cordwood and at harvest time to stook and thresh the grain. Often, he recalled, there was "a whole Métis outfit" of men that worked for this father.[25] Early twentieth century British farmer and homesteader, Georgina Binnie Clark also recalled that local Métis men regularly hired themselves out

[22] Joe Blondeau, interview by Sharon Gaddie, 19 August 1982, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute. www.metismuseum.ca
[23] Barnett, "Big Business," 21.
[24] Celina Amyotte Poitras, interview with Agnes Amyotte Fisher and Celina Amyotte Poitras by Sharon Gaddie and Margaret Jefferson, 3 August 1982, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute. www.metismuseum.ca
[25] John Joe Larocque, interview by Joe Ross, 13 August 1982, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

by the job to build fences for neighbours and farmers in the region. According to Binnie-Clark, she took advantage of the labour force Métis men provided, hiring Tom Klein [sic] on a temporary basis to put up three miles of two strand barbed wire fence at a cost of $160.00 including pickets and labour.[26] Consequently, Métis men served as temporary and ready labour force, particularly important at certain points in the season, such as planting and harvest which required large amounts of temporary labour.

This itinerant, temporary and seasonal type of work often required families relocate to be closer to their employer's fields, allowing women and children to contribute their labour within a familiar family-based economic structure (Figure 8.2 and 8.3). Picking rocks and clearing fields of weeds were the type of activity where families worked together. Caroline Henry recalled that her father often "worked out" for farmers and her mother, who was a very hardworking woman, worked beside him picking rocks and stones.[27] Comparably, Margaret Harrison described times during the 1940s when her mother, aunts and older cousins worked alongside her father and uncles as farm labourers.[28] Harrison recalled farmers coming to pick up entire families, including the women, children and elderly, and delivering them to the fields to work.

> the farmers would come and pick everybody up and they took everybody, the children and all. And they would just line them all up at the end of the field, give them these big bags and they were picking weeds and they go along and pick those weeds. And mother said they'd just be you know, all day picking weeds. And there'd be bags of weeds, they would take away. And they'd go dump the weed and bring the bags back. And they took all the kids, when they were picking those weeds.[29]

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[26] Georgina Binnie-Clark, *Wheat and Women* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 130-131.
[27] Caroline Henry, interview by Margaret Jefferson, 15 August 1982.Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca
[28] Margaret Harrison, interview with Adeline Pelletier dit Racette by Leah Dorion and Anna Flaminio,23-24 May 2002, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[29] Margaret Harrison, interview, 23-24 May 2002.

Figure 8.2 Family picking stones at Davidson, early 1900s[30]

Figure 8.3 Women with buckets, Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan, 1940s[31]

[30] Family Picking Stones at Davidson [early 1900s], S-B 1860, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[31] Women with buckets Crooked Lake, Saskatchewan [1940s], Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

Harrison also spoke fondly of the time she spent as a young girl travelling to the farmer's field each day. It was the role of grandparents and some older children, like Harrison, to stay behind at the wagons or at the camp to look after the younger children and prepare meals while older family members worked in the fields. In instances such as this, it was important for gender roles to be flexible, ensuring the completion of economic activity. In these instances, employers generally purchased family labour based on the job required, and did not employ men or women on an individual basis. The complementary nature of Métis family economic structures benefited farmers and created opportunity for families to engage in wage-labour activities.

Older Métis children's labour was a significant contributor to the family economy. Both young men and women began working at an early age. Young men often worked as farm hands for neighbouring farmers and young women took on domestic work in farmers homes (Figure 8.4). Both Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne recalled working for farmers as early as 12 to 14 years of age.[32] At 12 years old, Klyne went to work for a farmer herding sheep for 12 dollars a month, while Desjarlais noted that he started working for a farmer at age fourteen. The work these young men did however was not easy. Desjarlais recalled receiving room and board for looking after "about 35 head of cattle, about 60 pigs and a chicken house full of chickens" during the winter, with wages and additional responsibilities added in the spring when they began to work the land.[33] According to Desjarlais, it was work done to support the family, even if done only for room and board.[34] Young men such as Desjarlais and Klyne, when working outside the home, freed up food, resources and space in their own homes, helping alleviate the pressure their parents felt to support the family.

[32] Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne, interview by Sherry Farrell Racette, 6-7 December 2003, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca
[33] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[34] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

Figure 8.4 Young Charlie Racette with team of horses[35]

Children's labour was important in the home and any money earned contributed to the family reserves. Josephine Tarr noted that she and her brother often gathered and sold small loads of wood they hauled from the bush, earning about $2.00 per load. They gave the money to their mother to purchase essential food items that the family needed.[36] Likewise, Norma Welsh recalled that in the 1940s she and her siblings worked to earn money for the family. Working eight to ten hours a day picking potatoes at the Roman Catholic Church's farm near Katepwa, they could earn about a dollar a day which they used to help the family. This was a considerable amount of money, as "you could buy a whole, a whole bag of groceries with that dollar, you know…"[37]

[35] Charlie Racette with team of horses, photograph courtesy Bob Desjarlais and Irma Klyne.
[36] Josephine Tarr, interview by Victoria Racette, 27 February 1984, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca
[37] Norma Welsh with Joe Welsh, interview by Sherry Farrell Racette, 7-8 February 2004, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

Working alongside men in farm labour was not the only economy activity women engaged in. Many women and older female children also worked as domestics for other individuals and farm families, providing housekeeping, sewing and cleaning services. Opportunity for women to work as domestics increased with farm settlement, but these same opportunities also existed prior. In the early 1860s, Elise Klyne Kavanaugh, at the age of 16, worked as a domestic for Pascal Breland. For a year's work, she earned a buffalo robe, 2 sinews and 2 print dresses.[38] Seventy years later, Agnes Poitras Pelletier recalled that in the 1930s-'40s, she worked for a bachelor, cleaning house and washing clothes when she was only 11 years old. At 15, she started working for farmers, providing the same types of services, earning 25 cents a day, or $5.00 per month, plus room and board.[39] Similarly, Caroline Henry and sisters Agnes Amyotte Fisher and Celina Amyotte Poitras recalled working outside the home.[40] At 13 years of age, Poitras worked for a family in Lebret doing their washing and cleaning, earning $7.00 per month.[41]

Learning these skills from their mothers and grandmothers, domestic work prepared them for their lives as mothers and homemakers. Celina recalled that, like her mother, she washed and sewed for other people, "she was a good sewer, and that's what I did before I was married. I did a lot of sewing. I was a seamstress at home too because I had too many little ones."[42] Women did what they could and took advantage of economic opportunity as it presented itself. Caroline Henry recalled that she quit school to do what she called "working out" which she described as working for others during the summer and winter months for $15.00 a month, doing housework, milking cows, cleaning and sewing.[43] By the late 1940s, some women more formally and frequently gained wage employment of their own. In some instances, women found work cleaning cottages in the

[38] "100 Years of Age" *The Leader-Post*, Regina, 10 August 1945.
[39] Agnes Poitras Pelletier, interivew by Norman Fleury, 30 May 2003, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute.
[40] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.; Agnes Amyotte Fisher, interview, 3 August 1982.; Celina Amyotte Poitras, interview, 3 August 1982.
[41] Celina Amyotte Poitras, interview, 3 August 1982.
[42] Celina Amyotte Poitras, interview, 3 August 1982.
[43] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.

spring and fall or in the summer resorts that were developing around the Qu'Appelle Lakes.[44]

Seasonal and Long-term Employees

As farm settlement in the Qu'Appelle Valley increased, so too did the opportunity for Métis men and women to engage in paid labour. At the turn of the century, one of the region's largest land owners was Thomas Skinner, who had settled in the Valley region in the early 1880s with his wife and children.[45] By the 1930s, their eldest son, Ernie, regularly employed Métis labourers in both short-term temporary and seasonal arrangements.[46] Stanley Racette recalled working for Ernie Skinner in the 1930s-40s, helping harvest when they required extra labour.[47] Similarly, Bob Desjarlais recalled that his dad, uncles and many other men in the Valley region worked for Skinner well into the 1950s. Desjarlais recalled that his grandfather Louis Racette worked seasonally for Thomas Skinner for many years.[48] For some, what began as temporary or seasonal opportunities turned into long-term employment over many seasons and in many instances included employment opportunities for women and successive generations. Employing many Métis men, the Skinner family also hired wives and older daughters of some employees, engaging them as domestics in their homes. Likewise, employed the next generation of these families as they entered the workforce. In the case of the Skinner family, they regularly employed two and sometimes three generations of the Racette family, demonstrating a pattern of employment based on close-knit, long term and intergenerational working relationships between families.

When seasonally employed, families regularly moved within the Valley region to be closer to their employers, taking full advantage of any available seasonal employment

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[44] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.; Jimmy Larocque with Guy Blondeau, interview by Sherry Farrell Racette, 10-11 January 2004, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

[45] John Archer, ed. *Lake Katepwa: Memories of Yesterday with notes for Today.* (Regina: The Lake Katepwa Historical Society, 1984), 48.

[46] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.; George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.; George Klyne, interview with Cheryl Troupe and Maria Campbell, 30 March 2007.; George Klyne, interview by author, 4 August 2014.

[47] Stanley Racette, interview by Sharon Gaddie, 11 August 1983, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

[48] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

opportunities. Movement within the Valley region, increased access to employment opportunity, allowing families to remain within the local environment and within their extended family networks. Living in proximity to their employer did not necessarily guarantee work, but it certainly would have increased opportunity to secure work as it arose. Louis Racette, for instance, relocated to live close to his employer Thomas Skinner, living in a house on his employer's land (Figure 8.5).[49] That Racette lived on his employer's land, and worked for Skinner for many years also explains the generational nature of this employment where members of the Racette and Desjarlais families also worked for younger members of the Skinner family. Similarly, George Klyne recalled growing up in a house on Skinner land, as his father Andre also worked for the family for many years.[50]

Figure 8.5 Louis Racette and team of horses[51]

[49] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[50] George Klyne, interview, 4 August 2014.
[51] Louis Racette and a team of horses, photograph courtesy Margaret Harrison.

It is unclear when Louis Racette began working for Thomas Skinner but his family was living on Skinner land by 1916. In addition, Louis' sons Charles, Joseph and Norbert Racette, along with Joseph Parisien, worked for and lived close to Frederick Skinner, while Alex and Jack Parisien lived next to Ernie Skinner. Four lodgers also lived with Frederick Skinner, one of whom was 17-year-old Modeste Parisien, likely a close relative, perhaps even son of Alex, Jack or Joseph Parisien.[52] Mapping Skinner family land tenure alongside Métis residences in the Katepwa Lake area from the 1940s-50s demonstrates a pattern of multiple Métis residences on the periphery of Skinner's land (Figure 2.10). These were individuals and families who worked for the Skinner family, living close to their employers, but also remaining within their extended family networks. Not reflected on the map, however, are the temporary movements of farm labourer families such as described by Margaret Harrison that moved closer to the fields, sometimes for days, weeks or months at a time, living in tents to pick rocks and clear fields or during harvest season. In these instances, it was sometimes just men that relocated, whereas in other cases, women and children moved along with the men in their families to help with the workload.

Working for local farmers on a seasonal basis provided the Métis with a more stable income than simply working on a daily or temporary basis according to the job that needed completion. However, it was still a very meager income, compensated in room and board as Desjarlais described, or paid food or meat in exchange for their labour. The Skinner family for instance, regularly compensated their employees with food rations.[53] Klyne recalled that their family often received rations from Skinner's personal supply.

> By the month end we got rations. Skinner went to town and bought all the main stuff and he kept it in the house and every time we needed something, we went to him. Lard, sugar, flour, porridge, all that stuff. They fed them a lot of porridge. My mom cooked porridge all the time. [54]

Although payment in food rations was the principal means of compensation, Skinner sometimes paid employees small amounts of cash when requested.[55]

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[52] Canada Census Returns, 1916, Sub-District 20, Qu'Appelle, District 26, Saskatchewan, Government of Canada, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[53] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.; George Klyne, interview, 4 August 2014.
[54] George Klyne, interview, 4 August 2014.
[55] George Klyne, interview, 31 March 2007.

Desjarlais also recalled that Skinner made sure that he cared for his employees. Skinner, "had his own little ways" of making sure that none of his employees ever went hungry."[56] He bought dried saskatoon berries picked by Métis women that he later distributed to hungry families in the winter.[57] He regularly provided winter clothing to employee's children and gave the women and children small Christmas presents each year. He also let former employees live on his land long after they were too old to continue working for him.[58] In this way, Skinner acted with benevolence and kindness toward his former employees in exchange for years of their loyal service.

Whether physically working in alongside one another, or in gendered or sometimes generational roles, the complementary nature in which men, women, and even children, engaged in farm labour activity reinforced the cultural roles of men and women in Métis families and communities, as they had practiced for generations. The communal way in which they conducted economic activity ensured that all members of the family continued to fill complementary economic and social roles like when hunting buffalo in years prior and when engaging in wage labour for the Hudson's Bay Company posts in the late nineteenth century. The balanced, yet often gendered nature of these roles continued as families engaged in the settler economy in ways separate from farm labour.

Cordwood, Berries and Seneca Root: Harvesting and Selling Products of the Environment

When available, Métis worked harvesting wild foods such as berries and digging seneca root that they sold or exchanged for goods. Additionally, when seasonal labour employment was unavailable, Métis worked cutting cordwood or netted fish in the Qu'Appelle Lakes that they sold or traded to both for the farmers who regularly employed them as well as others in the Valley region. Métis most often exchanged both fish and cordwood for food or grocery items rather than for cash. Each of these activities brought additional foods, and sometimes additional income into the family. Joe Blondeau

[56] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[57] George Klyne noted that Henry Poitras and Joe Cardinal remained living on Skinner land well after they were no longer employed by the family. George Klyne, interview, 4 August 2014.; Bob Desjarlais, interview by Cheryl Troupe and Leah Dorion, 3 July 2002, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca
[58] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002. George Klyne, interivew, 4 August 2014.

recalled that his grandfather regularly supplied the Roman Catholic Church in Lebret with cordwood in the winter and in exchange they received a quarter of beef, eggs or other food items.[59] Stanley Racette recalled his father cutting brush and cordwood for numerous farmers in exchange for beef and traveling around the community in the winter selling or trading fish with local settlers for meat or butter, or other items that the family required.[60]

During the summer months, Métis picked wild berries, such as saskatoon berries, pin cherries and chokecherries for their own use and for sale, and they dug seneca root that they dried and sold to the Hudson's Bay Company and local merchants. Although were tasks that both men and women engaged in, selling berries or seneca root allowed women to enter the cash economy. According to Bob Desjarlais, it was also "a good way of making money."[61] Josephine Tarr recalled that in the 1930s, Mrs. Rene Amyotte worked hard to provide for her family by picking and selling berries as well as by making and selling hooked and braided rag rugs. In fact, Tarr noted, Mrs. Amyotte saved enough money from the sale of berries that she bought herself a milk cow.[62] Similarly, Agnes Poitras Pelletier recalled that her grandparents Melanie and Fred Major picked seneca root and that they also traded fish for groceries or whatever food items they could get.[63]

Seneca Snakeroot (*Polygala senega*) is a perennial plant commonly found in open woods and prairies, from southern Alberta to western New Brunswick. When chewed and swallowed it provided pain relief, soothing a sore throat, or when made into a poultice and applied to cuts it relieved pain and prevented infection.[64] Historical Geographer Maureen Lux argues that both Indigenous peoples and settlers intensively gathered seneca root throughout southern Saskatchewan in the late nineteenth century.[65] One of the only ways that First Nations women could earn income, seneca root was a valuable resource. By the 1890s, First Nations women in southern Saskatchewan gathered and sold

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[59] Joe Blondeau, interview, 19 August 1982.
[60] Stanley Racette, interview, 11 August 1983.
[61] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[62] Josephine Tarr, interview, 27 February 1984.
[63] Agnes Poitras Pelletier, interview, 30 May 2003.
[64] Robin J. Marles, Christina Clavelle, Leslie Monteleone, Natalie Tays, Donna Burns, *Aboriginal Plant Use in Canada's Northwest Boreal Forest* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 216-217.
[65] Maureen Lux, *Medicine That Walks: Disease, Medicine and Canadian Plains Native People, 1880-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 99.

seneca root at nearby villages. In 1894, Crooked Lakes Indian Agent Allan MacDonald noted that seneca root was the chief article produced for sale on reserve, while Muskowpetung Agent J.B. Lash also reported that gathering seneca root provided those on reserve with a large amount of money. This should have been welcome news, particularly during a period of crop failure and a general depression, but Lash remained worried that the harvesting of seneca root not only kept First Nations people off reserve for an extended period, but also encouraged the continued "old habit of roaming of the prairies."[66]

Likewise, historian Miriam McNab argues that selling seneca root was a significant source of income for many First Nations women and their families well into the twentieth century.[67] McNab demonstrates that often the profits from the sale of seneca root went towards the purchase of food and supplies necessary for the family. Similarly, Eleanor Brass described the practice of digging seneca root on Peepeekisis reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley and its role in bringing in money to feed the family.

> Jobs were at a minimum so we dug seneca roots to sell; it brought a good price at that time and everybody was out digging. I remember one morning we had nothing to eat for breakfast, but we had a big bag of roots for sale. So, we hooked up our horses, loaded our bag of roots, and left for Abernethy where the market was good. When we arrived there, we sold the roots and immediately went to a café for breakfast. ... Then we spent some of our money on groceries and saved the rest for my husband's tobacco and papers.[68]

The digging and sale of seneca root was common economic practice in southern and central Saskatchewan, particularly among First Nations and Métis families.

For Métis families, excursions for picking berries or digging seneca roots was often a family affair enjoyed by all members of the family, even children. Some dug seneca root in the immediate vicinity of their homes while others travelled farther afield within the Valley region to harvest the root. Desjarlais recalls the entire family, including his grandmother, parents and siblings loading up in the wagons and traveling within the Valley, setting up camp in different places where they could find seneca root. The women

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[66] Lux, *Medicine That Walks*, 99.
[67] McNab, "First Nations Women," 85-86.
[68] Eleanor Brass, *I Walk in Two Worlds* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1987) 37.

and children, he recalled, walked the Valley hills and coulees searching for seneca root, when the men worked in the farm fields. He described their trip.

> Mom and Grandma, well we'd go and dig seneca root all morning and then we'd take a lunch along with us and, and we'd have a lunch along a slough or someplace. And then, then at night, well Dad would come back to camp there and come stay with us overnight, and then next morning he'd go back and work for the farmer eh. And then when, when we finish digging in a certain area, there, when we got to the point where we had to walk a little too far, well Dad in the evening when he'd come back, we'd have supper, and then after supper well we'd, get the horses and hook them up on the wagon and move camp couple or three miles up there and went to set up camp there again and we got fresh digging.[69]

Caroline Henry also described picking seneca root as she remembered it from her childhood. Unlike Desjarlais, she recalled digging seneca root close to home on short outings with her mother. According to Henry, the kids would all help their mother, walking the coulees from morning until night looking for the plant, at the same time as gathering other plants such as berries or hazelnuts, medicines.[70]

Métis used a specific tool and method to dig seneca root. According to Desjarlais, his father was strict about how to harvest the root. Often, they used a small wooden implement to loosen the ground around the plant and lift the plant, or they made a tool from the metal springs of an old wagon, with a small pick attached to the end. When picking, they had to be careful not to break the plant away from the root before removing it from the ground, and to not to dig up the ground so much that they left a large hole. This way, Desjarlais noted when "you pull your digger out and, a lotta times you, you hardly leave any marks where you were eh? And, and that's the way my Dad taught us.[71]

Once harvested, they separated the root from the top of the plant, leaving the flowers behind so the plant could re-seed itself.[72] Then they cleaned the root and hung it to dry in preparation for sale. The Métis sometimes sold the root when it was still green but they obtained a better price when sold dry. Once dry, they packaged the roots in large bags and sold them by the pound to local merchants in exchange for cash, food or goods. Some also shipped the roots directly to merchants in larger centres. Desjarlais recalled

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[69] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[70] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.
[71] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[72] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

that his brother Tommy used to dig seneca root, dry it and send it to Winnipeg usually around Christmas time each year because it would take that long to dry.[73] Joe Blondeau recalled that they traded seneca root directly with local merchants and received about 25 cents per pound.[74] Digging seneca roots was a way Métis, including women, entered the cash economy. Digging seneca root brought income into the family. Caroline Henry recalled that the money her mother saved from digging and selling seneca root helped her family purchase the logs for their house.[75] "We used to take bags and bags, sometimes we would get $26.00 a bag, you know, that dry. We had that dried and washed really good. We got our house built by seneca roots."[76]

Women's Sewing and Artistic Production

Women not only engaged in the settler economy by working in the fields alongside men, but also as domestics or by working to sell the berries or roots they harvested. They also regularly made and sold items of clothing and decorative household objects produced specifically to bring money into the family. In making these objects, they used their skills in sewing, beading, embroidery and other decorative arts passed on to them by their mothers and grandmothers. Norbert Welsh recalled that in the late 1880s he commonly bought products, particularly moccasins, made by local Métis and First Nations women to sell in his store at File Hills.[77] This economic practice has a long history, dating to the early years of the fur trade, when Indigenous women produced clothing and goods, which they traded to the fur company posts in exchange for trade goods.[78]

Women and Gender Studies scholar and artist Sherry Farrell Racette has written extensively on Indigenous women's economic production and their efforts to bring income into the family. Métis women, from the early fur trade period continuing well into the twentieth century, were motivated by economic gain to provide clothing and material goods to fur traders, settlers and newcomers. Consequently, there was a concerted effort

[73] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[74] Joe Blondeau, interview, 19 August 1982.
[75] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.
[76] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.
[77] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 172-173.
[78] Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves Together,".

to adapt the work of women during the fur trade to emerging rural economies, particularly in finding avenues for women to continue to produce and sell hand-crafted and often decorative items.[79] Women's traditional skills in sewing and handiwork were essential to supporting Métis families into the early twentieth century.

Farrell Racette provides an example of Qu'Appelle River Valley Métis women who produced and sold their beadwork, embroidery and hooked rugs in the early twentieth century, demonstrating that women's artistic production was a critical component of their economy. She discusses the work of Melanie Blondeau in supporting herself and family by teaching handicrafts at the Qu'Appelle Industrial school. Born in 1866, Melanie was the daughter of Francoise Desjarlais and Simon Blondeau. She was forty years old when her father died in 1906, leaving her the title to the homestead on which she, her mother and aunt lived.[80] According to Farrell Racette, in 1913 Amelia Paget, a member of the Canadian Handicraft Guild sought out the work of Métis women in the Qu'Appelle Valley, particularly that of the Blondeau family. Paget had spent a significant amount of her childhood growing up in the Qu'Appelle Valley and was familiar with the work of First Nations and Métis women.[81] By the early 1900s the Handicraft Guild was working with the Department of Indian Affairs to market traditional arts unique to Canada.[82] When visiting the Qu'Appelle Valley, Paget sought out the Blondeau family who were "noted years ago for the fancy work they did in quill, silk and beadwork, as well as for moccasin making." Paget recalled,

> Finding that the three remaining members of the family, Madame Blondeau, and her aged sister Isabelle, and Melanie the daughter still occupied the little cottage on their small holding directly across the Lake from the (Industrial) School… Here I found that Melanie was the sole support of her family, and that she earned every cent by her excellent work. Her mother and Aunt Isabelle were too old and feeble to help her in any way towards earning anything for their daily needs. But

[79] Sherry Farrell Racette, "Nimble Fingers and Strong Backs: First Nations and Métis Women in Fur Trade and Rural Economies," in *Indigenous Women and Work, From Labor to Activism*, ed. Carol Williams (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 148-162.
[80] Simon Blondeau, Last Will and Testament, 20 October 1906, M. Blondeau, File 521351, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.When Simon Blondeau died in 1906 he left his first homestead SE3-21-13-W2 to his unmarried daughter Melanie and second homestead SW 14-25-12-W2 located north of the Valley in the settlement of St. Delphine to his son Pierre.
[81] Amelia M. Paget, *People of the Plains* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2004).
[82] Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves," 244.

> they had taught her their handicrafts, and what that meant to them nobody can ever fully realize."[83]

Impressed by the skill of Melanie Blondeau's hand, Paget left materials and instruction for her to produce several decorative items for the Guild, as well as arranging with the Industrial School to hire Blondeau as an instructor in Indian handicraft. Blondeau remained employed at the school from 1914 to at least 1931, earning on average $225.00 annually.[84] This income supported Blondeau, her aging mother and aunt, and combined with the fact that Melanie owned the land on which they lived would have provided extra security in allowing her to support her family. The traditional skills, passed on from older generations allowed women such as Melanie Blondeau to bring income into the family, creating some economic stability during trying times.

Celina Amyotte Poitras of Lebret also recalled that women's traditional skills were instrumental in supporting the family, particularly during the Depression. She recalled that during this time, that "there wasn't a speck of work for men," and so it was often women's labour that supported the family. She recalled,

> I did a lot of sewing for people, that's one thing I had to fall back on… but I used to do that, I had no electricity. I had coal oil lamps. I could hardly see because I had to sew at night, because I had babies and when they were asleep then I'd sew…so we managed to live through.[85]

Similarly, Margaret Harrison, Bob Desjarlais and Joseph Moran recalled that their mothers and aunts were well known as seamstresses and worked diligently in the 1930s-40s sewing and producing hooked rugs sold throughout the Valley.[86] Moran recalled that his mother's handmade rugs enabled her to bring some income into the family, often its sole support. He describes her entrepreneurial spirit and her tenaciousness in selling her rugs. For many years she took the train from Lebret to Regina where she marketed her

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[83] Quoted in Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves," 244. Amelia M. Paget (1913), "Report on the Qu'Appelle Agencies," file 40,000-9, vol. 7908, RG 10, Library and Archives Canada.
[84] Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves," 246.
[85] Celina Amyotte Poitras, interview, 3 August 1982.
[86] Joseph Moran, interview by Sharon Gaddie, 22 August 1983, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca.; Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.; Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.; BobDesjarlais, interview, 3 July 2002.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 23-24 May 2002.; Margaret Harrison, interview 24 Februrary 2014.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.

rugs in exchange for clothes or money. According to Moran, she conducted quite a prosperous trade for she eventually attracted the attention of the local police, perhaps because she was selling her goods without any type of required license or formal business establishment. According to Moran,

> She used to make rugs, make rugs day after day. She makes 300-400 rugs and comes to Regina to trade them for clothes or anything she could get a hold of, for money or she got clothes. She would take them down to Fort Qu'Appelle and sell them down there. Nobody seemed to bother her. The police told her to be careful lot of times in Regina here for doing that because she had no income, her husband was blind…she was making a little bit of money… I don't know there was some complaints I suppose…but a lot of times the detectives would actually wait for her in Regina, you know because she'd been doing it for years. Lot of times she'd have to come in and sneak around but she had good customers, private customers, people that wanted rugs. But the police didn't like that. When the war broke out she slowed down.[87]

Clear in this story is the drive of Moran's mother to support her family despite challenges and police enforcement of the law. She was willing to "sneak around" and conduct her business avoiding the watchful eye of the authorities. She was simply acting out of necessity, filling an economic role not filled by her blind husband. As the sole or main breadwinner in their families, Mrs. Moran and Melanie Blondeau are examples of the efforts of Métis women devising strategies to do what they needed to support their families.

In the same way, both Margaret Harrison and Bob Desjarlais recount that the women in their family worked as seamstresses and made and sold hooked and braided rag rugs. These women sold their rugs to neighbours and local farm families, often for three or four dollars each, or they traded them for food items like butter, eggs or meat that Métis families did not produce for themselves.[88] The sale of rugs provided much needed income and food to feed hungry families. The three or four dollars a rug brought in was a lot of money for these families, as according to Desjarlais, "at that time, five dollars was enough to feed a family of four for at least a week."[89] The importance of this activity to the family economy is echoed in the words of Margaret's mother Adeline Pelletier dit

[87] Joseph Moran, interview, 22 August 1983.
[88] Margaret Harrison, interview, 23-24 May 2002.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[89] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.

Racette who remarked, "you didn't have to worry about anything, once you have a rug like that."[90]

Harrison's mother Adeline was not the only woman in the family to produce and sell handmade rugs. Her paternal grandmother, Vitaline Cardinal Pelletier made hooked rugs, sold by her paternal grandfather Josue Pelletier. According to Harrison, her grandfather Josue Pelletier, was a fish peddler. "He sold fish, berries and rugs throughout the Valley, often in exchange for meat such as beef or pork."[91] Her grandfather and uncles each covered opposite sides of the Valley as a type of sales territory so they could cover a large amount of ground and so their sales did not overlap. This strategy, she noted, reduced competition and helped maintain family cohesion.[92]

Conclusion

From late nineteenth century and into the mid twentieth century, Métis across the prairies increasingly integrated into the settler economy. Often living on the road allowance, their integration was not as land owners but as temporary or seasonal farm labourers, or as peddlers of products harvested from the natural environment. Engaging in wage labour provided some economic stability and allowed Métis to continue to live within familiar territory that they intimately understood. Gathering buffalo bones, picking rocks or cutting wood, harvesting seneca root and berries, and selling fish or the handmade products of women's labour helped families maintain their economic independence and maintain their connection to the land. Most often, compensation for this economic activity was necessary food or supplies the Métis did not produce themselves. As a result, the Métis lived within a complex barter economy where they traded their labour for the goods, supplies and many of the foods they relied upon.

Families did what they could to survive, and often continued to work within an integrated family economy, where all members of the family, even children, had valuable skills, abilities and labour to contribute. Women's labour however, made a significant contribution to the family economy as they worked alongside men in gendered, flexible,

[90] Adeline Pelletier dit Racette, interview, 23-24 May 2002.
[91] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[92] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 23-24 May 2002.

complementary and diverse ways. Often, labour demands required that all members of the family contribute their labour regardless of gender distinctions. Women found opportunity to engage in a cash economy outside of the home, working as domestics or selling the products of their labour, while also remaining responsible for domestic responsibilities within the family. In many instances, women marketed their traditional artistic and sewing skills, taught to them by their own mothers and grandmothers, to bring additional income, and necessary food and supplies into the home. Together, Métis families took advantage of the economic opportunities that presented themselves, and in doing so, adapted to the growing settler agrarian economy in ways that were often a continuation of past practices and not a complete adaptation to a foreign way of life.

Chapter Nine*:* Harvesting the Valley Environment: Feeding the Family

We ate a lot of vegetables because we had gardens, we would put in a garden, and we ate rabbit, duck, prairie chicken, fish and wild meat. Some people tell me we ate gophers, but I deny that all the time.[1]

Living on the road allowance in the Qu'Appelle Valley differed little from other Métis communities across the prairies. As families relocated within the Valley environment, they continued to utilize familiar territory and resources. Families lived according to a seasonal cycle, harvesting resources when available and preserving food for the winter months. Fish, deer, rabbit, prairie chicken, ducks and geese were generally plentiful, as well as a wide variety of wild plants and berries. Garden produce was also abundant given that many had access to water from the lakes and river to irrigate their gardens during dry seasons. When not eaten fresh, food was dried, smoked or canned and then stored away for later use. Meals were simple and prepared from what was available. Families had limited economic means so they purchased little. Stanley Racette recalled that in the 1920s and 1930s, families purchased only a small amount of the food they consumed, including staples such as flour, sugar, tea and salt and pepper.[2] They grew or collected most of what they ate and because they could not afford to purchase meat, they hunted or traded with others. They also regularly traded their labour for the goods they did not produce themselves. Often, Racette recalled, they received beef or pork, milk, butter, eggs, cream or other staple foods from their employers in exchange for their labour.[3] Despite limited income, families continued to share food throughout their extended families and made sure that food remained a significant part of social activities and celebrations.

When local magistrate W.A. Clark surveyed the Métis' economic situation in the Qu'Appelle and File Hills Métis settlements in 1886, he painted a bleak picture.[4]

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[1] Norma Welsh, interview by author, 16 February 2014.
[2] Stanley Racette, interview, 11 August 1983.
[3] Stanley Racette, interview, 11 August 1983.
[4] W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada

Although many wished to find work freighting or cutting and selling cord wood, of the 123 families surveyed, most had "no prospect" of supporting themselves other than by hunting and fishing. Most also had very little, if any, meat, potatoes, flour or grain stored for winter (Table 9.1). Only seventeen households had any meat or fish stored, in varying quantities. Two households had 20 and 40 pounds of meat stored, while two others, Moise Vallee and Marshall Klyne, had considerably more. Vallee had 100 pounds and Klyne, 700 pounds. This was more than enough meat to feed their own families and in Klyne's circumstance, this would have fed much of his extended family. Clark did not record the quantity of fish that families had stored, but noted that fishing was an important means for the elderly to support themselves. Fishing, Clark noted, was the way that elderly Métis like Simon Blondeau and Francoise Desjarlais; Baptiste Desjarlais and Marie Martin; and, Alexander Fisher and Susanne Desjarlais and others supported themselves. In addition to these three elderly couples, Clark identified another five other elderly individuals or couples and nine families relying on fishing as their sole means of support.

Food Stored	No. of Families	No. of families without stores
Meat	4	119
Fish	13	110
Potatoes	9	114
Flour	103	20
>1 sack flour	36	
1-2 sacks flour	48	
3-5 sacks flour	15	
6-7 sacks flour	3	
10+ sacks flour	1	

Table 9.1: Food Stored in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Households

Clark also recorded the amount of potatoes that families had on hand. He recorded that nine households had potatoes, five of which had eight to ten bushels, and two with 15-16 bushels. It was only the families of Augustin Brabant with 30 bushels and James Grant with 60 bushels that had a significant enough quantity to last the winter and likely share among their extended family. Despite growing vegetable gardens, there is no

indication that families had any other root vegetables stored. Nor did Clark consider the amount of wild foods such as berries that families may have harvested and stored.

Although few had any meat or potatoes stored, most had at least a small quantity of flour. Only fifteen households surveyed had no flour, while 84 others had less than two sacks, and only one, the household of Hilaire Boucher had ten sacks of flour. Boucher, while fortunate enough to have ten sacks of flour on hand, had no meat or potatoes stored. Even Vallee and Klyne, who had significant meat stores, had only two bushels of flour. Clearly there was a notable difference across households as to what families had available to them for the winter months. Excess of one type of food did not necessarily guarantee stores of other types of food. In most instances, families only had one type of food stored. In no household did families have all three, meat, potatoes and flour stored. Even in the five households Clark identified as more financially secure, or "well-fixed," stores of all three, meat, potatoes and flour were absent. James Grant, who Clark noted was "well-fixed" only had potatoes and a small amount of flour stored. Clark may have determined him better off than others because he had ten horses, two cattle and twelve pigs, but he still had food stores comparable to his neighbours.

Just as there were notable variations across families, there were also differences between the two settlements. Those in Qu'Appelle had less flour but more meat and fish than those in File Hills. There were no households in File Hills with fish stores, likely because of their distance from the lakes. This suggests that these File Hills families may have relied less on fishing and more on hunting, trapping and other subsistence activity.

In these two settlements, most were poor and had very little. Despite their poverty, Clark considered few of these families destitute enough that they required government intervention. This was principally because subsistence hunting and fishing remained a viable means of support. For many, it was their only means of support (Table 9.2). For some, the money they received from selling their scrip provided support, at least for the short term. Over fifty individuals and families, Clark noted, had no prospect of work, and many more had no prospect except hunting and fishing. Most continued to engage in subsistence activity and eagerly sought out wage labour. Some looked to supplement their income by freighting, selling wood or taking day labour when available with the Roman Catholic Mission or neighbouring farmers. To ensure they were able to

do this work, nearly all households had at least one horse and over sixty households had more than one (Table 9.3). They tried to keep their horses fed and in "good order," as they were an important part of their livelihood. A team of two was necessary for farm work or for freighting but Clark did not record the extent to which Métis attempted to farm, or their use of horses for farm work. He did however, note that only two households, father and son, Michel and John Klyne, had grain stored for the future. In addition, he noted that over half of the households had at least one cow (35 had more than one), and twenty-seven households had at least two pigs. Antoine Larocque was one of the community's largest livestock owners with four horses, four pigs and a herd of 15 cattle.

	No. of Households
No prospect of work	52
Hunting	31
Fishing	17
Seeking Freighting Work	15
Selling Cord wood	7
Other work (Roman Catholic Mission, farmers, day work, etc.)	7
Scrip	7
"Well-Fixed"	5
Horses in "good order"	35
Horses in "poor order"	9

Table 9.2: Means of Support for Métis in Qu'Appelle and File Hills

Livestock	No. of Households
Horses	103
1	37
2	41
3-4	19
5-9	4
10 +	2
Cattle	61
1	26
2	18
3-4	9
5-9	6
10+	1
Pigs	30
1	3
2	14
3-4	10
5-9	2
10+	1

Table 9.3: Livestock owned by Qu'Appelle and File Hills Métis

Women in the Survey

In addition to the meagre and sporadic ways families supported themselves, Clark also described the economic situation for the elderly. Having even fewer options than the younger generation, the elderly relied on their children or on fishing or catching rabbits to survive. In one instance, an elderly widow, Mrs. William Beaulieau was going to have to kill her only cow to support herself. In addition to Mrs. Beaulieau, Clark noted the presence of 14 additional households headed by women, 13 of which were widows. In five instances, women lived alone, whereas the remaining women had children living with them. Most female-headed households had little food stored for the winter and few horses or cattle, or little prospect of supporting themselves. According to Clark, one of the only options widowed women like Suzanne Bercier Pelletier, 75, had in supporting themselves was to depend upon family members.[5] Women such as Madeleine Pelletier Bourassa and Madeleine Klyne, who also had other family members living with them,

[5] Suzanne Pelletier, Household 44, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

supported themselves by fishing or hunting small game and with their garden produce.[6] Indeed, these women's economic situation seemed grim but they were not entirely dependent upon relatives. They lived within an economy that privileged extended family and kinship relationships with all members of the family contributing their labour.

In late nineteenth and early twentieth century Métis communities, "family was the basic element in any activity."[7] Payment argues that for Métis in the nearby South Saskatchewan River region,

> grandparents were involved in the life of the nuclear family, both socially and economically. Widows usually lived with one of their children, whether at home with the heir or with one of their married daughters. They took part in domestic work and child care. Aged parents usually lived alone in a separate home, generally close to that of one of their children."[8]

This differed little for Qu'Appelle Métis women. Kinship responsibilities allowed women, despite old age, to maintain their own households. It was as common for elderly men and women to live alone as it was for them to reside with younger generations. Often, old people had unmarried adult children or sometimes grandchildren living with them. It was the role of younger generations to look after the elderly and help take care of tasks such as hauling water or chopping wood. In return, older generations provided childcare for young children, acted as cultural teachers and mentors, shared food, and contributed their labour to the extended family.

Métis acted and made decisions with the family in mind, including the ways in which they produced, harvested and shared food. This did not just apply to the immediate family, but to the extended family and often the entire community. Female kinship played a significant role in structuring the community, and women's contributions to the family through their food harvesting and production was significant.[9] Payment details the role of

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[6] Madeleine Bourassa, Household 62 W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Madeleine Klyne, Household 51, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[7] Payment, *Free People,* 42-43.

[8] Payment, *Free People*, 38-39.

[9] Payment, *Free People.;* LaVallée, *St. Laurent.;* St. Onge, "Memories,".

women in Batoche during this period arguing that due to the patriarchal influence of the Catholic Church and the disappearance of the buffalo, the complementary nature of women and men's roles changed, relegating women to underappreciated domestic tasks.

Women made a significant contribution to the family in ways that changed over the course of their lifecycle. As children, they started learning from their mothers, grandmothers and other women in their families. As young women, many exercised the skills learned, working as domestics outside of the home. As women aged, they provided essential domestic labour but also increasingly acted as producers and processors of food. Women were responsible for the sharing of food across the family, a cultural tradition that reinforced kinships relationships and responsibilities. When married, women took on extra domestic responsibilities in running their own households and taking care of their children. However, they remained supported by parents, other relatives and extended family members living close by. Often elderly parents lived with, or in homes adjacent to their adult children.

As women aged they became valued for their experience, but also for their specialized knowledge around medicines, midwifery and funeral protocols and for the time they spent supervising the family's young children. Recognized as family matriarchs, older women held respected positions in the family and community. They were the custodians and transmitters of traditions and religious beliefs, and responsible for transmitting cultural and practical knowledge related to food harvesting, preparation and production to younger generations. They played a significant role in family governance, working to ensure the maintenance of harmonious relationships across the extended family. Often, it was these women who also kept track of family births, deaths and marriages. Maintaining knowledge that identified who one was related to was an important function in Métis communities that privileged kinship relationships.

Consequently, older women remained respected and vital members of their family networks. Their position and food harvesting, preparation and production abilities ensured that they maintained their independence and autonomy, keeping their own households and residing separate from, but still close to relatives. In 1886, Clark

identified Suzanne Bercier Pelletier as an old widow entirely dependent on son-in-law Roderick Ross.[10] Indeed by the 1880s, Pelletier was already an old woman. The widow of Charles Pelletier, she was however living in the Qu'Appelle Valley surrounded by extended family members. Many of her adult children and their families lived in the immediate vicinity and north of the Valley in the St. Delphine or File Hills area, including her sons Joseph and Cuthbert and daughter Suzanne Ross living in the Qu'Appelle Valley with their respective families.[11] Living close to her adult children and grandchildren, she would have taken an active role in helping care for her grandchildren. For a time, her son Edouard and his five children lived with her, but by 1886 Pelletier lived alone, maintaining her own household because Eduoard had relocated to the St. Delphine or File Hills area about 50 kilometres north of the Valley.[12] Pelletier's sons Joseph, Alphonse and Alexander had already taken up land and were living in the File Hills area by the time Edouard moved.[13]

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[10] Suzanne Pelletier, Household 44, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[11] Joseph Pelletier, Household 52, Sub-District H – Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Roderick Ross, Household 55, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Cuthbert Pelletier, Household 42, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Roderick Ross, household 43, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[12] Suzanne Pelletier family, Household 59, Sub-District H, Qu'Appelle, District 192, The Territories, Government of Canada Census, 1881, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Suzanne Pelletier, Household 44. W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[13] Edouard Pelletier, Household 15, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Alphonse Pelletier, Household 11. W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Alexander Pelletier, Household 12, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-

Pelletier was not entirely dependent upon her son-in-law as Clark predicted. Rather, she was central to the Pelletier extended family. Likewise, Pelletier was, through marriage, also part of a much larger extended family network across the Valley region, stretching north to File Hills that included, among others, the St. Denis, Ross, Desjarlais, and Lemire families. Pelletier's kinship relationships also extended into the Fayant and Klyne families. Charles Pelletier's sister Josephte was the wife Antoine Fayant, and sister Charlotte's daughter was Madeleine Klyne. Two of Pelletier's children, Alphonse and Josephte, were married to the children of Jean Baptiste Desjarlais and Marie Martin. Another of Desjarlais and Martin's children, Thomas Desjarlais, was married to Madeline Klyne, daughter of Madeleine Beauchemin and granddaughter of Charlotte Pelletier. Each of these families would have respected the familial relationship and fictive kinship to Pelletier and recognized her as one of their aunties or grandmothers, following the cultural practice of naming older relatives as grandparents, aunts and uncles regardless of whether they were, in fact, your immediate relations.

Madeleine Pelletier Bourassa's situation was similar. She was the widow of Jean Baptiste Bourassa who had died in 1882 after working many years for the HBC at Shoal Lake, Fort Pelly and Fort Ellice.[14] Together, Madeleine and Jean Baptiste had nine children, many of whom signed Treaty 4 in 1874. Madeleine and Jean Baptiste along with adopted daughter Bella took treaty at Pasqua reserve, while daughters LaRose and Madeleine took treaty at George Gordon reserve and son, Baptiste at Cote reserve.[15] In 1886, Clark noted that not only was Bourassa widowed, but that she had received her $160 scrip and was going to support herself by hunting rabbits.[16]

1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Joseph Pelletier, Household 13, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[14] Madeleine Bourassa, as heir of Jean Baptiste Bourassa, Scrip Claim 143, 2 May 1885, Vol. 1337. RG-15-D-II -8-c, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[15] Madeleine Bourassa, Declaration, 15 June 1900, Vol. 496, RG-15-D-II-1, North-West Halfbreed Claims Commission, 1900, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Bella Bourassa, Claim 1271, Vol. 1337, RG15 – D- II-8-c, North-West Halfbreed Claims Commission, 1900, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[16] Mrs. Jean Baptiste Bourassa, Household 62, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-

In 1886, four years after Jean Baptiste had died, Madeleine and her children discharged themselves from treaty to apply for scrip.[17] Leaving Pasqua, Bourassa moved to the Qu'Appelle Lakes, living on section 8-21-13- W2, close to the Roman Catholic Mission at Lebret at the west end of Mission Lake, where there was already a number of Métis households living on the same section.[18] Arguably, some of these families may have been trying to eke out a living close to the Mission rather than in the family-based communities that lined the Qu'Appelle Lakes, as there were few evident kinship relationships between the families residing on this section.

For Bourassa, however, her children LaRose, Madeleine and Patrice were living close by and her son Pierre and two grandsons lived with her. For a time, David and Isadore Camille lived with their grandmother and attended the Lebret Industrial School when in 1885, their father, Baptiste moved from the Qu'Appelle Valley to Fort Pelly with his second wife.[19] LaRose married Pierre Flammand the year they entered treaty and daughter Madeleine married Norbert Pelletier in 1881.[20] Both daughters were living in the region with their husbands and families, as was son Patrice and wife, Catherine Daniel, who lived File Hills.[21] Sharing her household with her adult son Pierre and two

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1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[17] List of Halfbreeds who have Withdrawn from Treaty, 1 June 1888, File 845, Department of Indian Affairs, Hobbema Agency, Glenbow Archives; Assistant Secretary to Superintendant General, Department of Indian Affairs, 26 February 1894, File 111,716, RG 10, Vol. 3912, Department of Indian Affairs, Library and Archives Canada.

[18] Madeleine Bourassa, Household 62, W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Pierre Bourassa, Claim 169, 1 May 1885, Vol. 1325, RG 15-D-II-8-b, North-West Half-breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada. Families living on 8-21-13 included: Joseph Vilbrun, Joseph Lambert, George Fisher, Marshall Vivier, Mrs. Louis Duscharme, Gabriel Fisher, Alphonso Martin. In neighbouring sections were Simon Blondeau Sr.; Mrs. Pete LaPierre and her son Thomas LaPierre.

[19] Baptiste Bourassa, Claim 2225, Vol 1337, RG – D-II-8-c, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada; List of Halfbreeds who have Withdrawn from Treaty, 1 June 1888, File 845, Department of Indian Affairs, Hobbema Agency, Glenbow Archives. Baptiste Bourassa had taken treaty at Cote Reserve with his first wife. His second wife Harriet was a member of Keeseekoose when the family discharged from treaty in 1886.

[20] Norbert Pelletier, Claim 1135, Vol. 1363, RG 15-D-II-8-c, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

[21] Patrice Bourassa, Claim 74, Vol. 1325, RG 15-D-II-8-b, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Pierre Flammand, heir to his deceased children, Claim 589, Vol. 1347, RG-15-D-II-8-c, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.; Norbert Pelletier, Claim 1135, Vol. 1363, RG 15-D-II-8-c, North-West Half-Breed Claims Commission, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.

grandchildren, Bourassa would have maintained her traditional role in the household, contributing her domestic labour but also looking after her grandchildren, while her son and grandchildren would have fulfilled their own gendered and generational roles in the household. That she had a network of adult children and their families in the region also would have allowed Bourassa to contribute to the large extended family economy. This spatial organization influenced and supported women's ability to maintain their position in the family economy and contributed to the ability of women like Suzanne Bercier Pelletier or Madeleine Pelletier Bourassa to support themselves well into old age. Living within an extended family network provided mutual aid and support, social inclusion and opportunity for older women to exercise their traditional roles in the family, including fishing and hunting small game to support themselves. This pattern remained consistent in Qu'Appelle Métis communities into the mid-twentieth century.

Fishing for a Living

Fish, such as perch, whitefish, northern pike and walleye was a mainstay in the Métis diet because they were plentiful in the Qu'Appelle Lakes and easily preserved and stored.[22] Families close to the lakes depended on fish during the winter, during times of need and when other foods were unavailable. Fishing was a year-round activity but fishing technology was seasonal in nature, with different tools, resources and labour requirements at different times of the year. During the seasons the lake water was open, fishermen used boats, barbed hooks, spears and nets. In winter, fishermen used hand held augers to break the ice, nets to fish and dog sleds to move their catch and nets to and from shore. A small sled pulled by one dog could easily haul a fisherman's equipment and catch, and so, they remained a popular mode of transportation when fishing well into the 1940s (Figure 9.1).[23]

[22] Margaret Harrison, interview, February 24, 2014.
[23] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.

Figure 9.1: Joe Pelletier with dog sled, along Katepwa Lake, 1940s[24]

When the water was open, Métis used nets for fishing the lakes or hooks and spears to fish at the Katepwa Lake dam, in the Qu'Appelle River or in the Valley's many creeks. Children learned to fish at a young age, first fishing in the river and creeks, rather than in the lakes. Spring fishing at the Katepwa dam was particularly rewarding because fish were spawning and plentiful. Fish were often so plentiful that fishermen easily caught them using rudimentary fishing equipment, such as a simple "stick with a piece of rope on it and a hook in the end," by using a pitchfork, or even just by dipping in a pail.[25]

Many preferred using nets because once set they could leave them unattended, and most importantly, nets yielded a larger catch than fishing by other means.[26] Generally, Métis used two types of net – gill and seine nets. Both types were vertical deployed nets with weights along the bottom and buoys at the top to hold the net at the water's surface. Gill nets were generally set in a straight line, fixing one end to an immobile object at shore and using a boat to extend the net into the water where it was attached to another immobile object such as an anchor, the boat or in the case of a narrow

[24] Archer, *Katepwa Lake*, 235.
[25] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.; Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[26] C.B. Portt, G.A. Coker, D.L. Ming and R.G. Randall, *A Review of Fish Sampling Methods Commonly Used in Canadian Freshwater Habitats* (Ottawa: Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2006).

water body, the opposite shore. Seine nets were similar and set different ways. For instance, two people might wade through the water dragging the net between them forming a U-shape. Or, they might be set by attaching one end to an immobile object and wading or boating through the water, dragging the net in a semi-circle formation.[27]

Larger yields guaranteed that the Métis would have fish to consume fresh, preserve for the future and share across the family. Most spent a considerable amount of time in the late summer and early fall preparing their catch; cleaning, smoking, drying and sometimes canning the fish. However, it was not only preparing and preserving a netted catch that required larger amounts of labour. Setting the nets and bringing in the catch also required significant labour and necessitated that men often, but not always, went out in groups to do this work. Margaret Harrison recounted that all the men in her family contributed their labour setting the nets, and in bringing in their catch "because they would need every hand."[28]

Métis women regularly engaged in fishing activities as required to feed their families. Women such as Madeleine Klyne and her three daughters, Elise Kavanaugh, Marie Bellegarde and Madeleine Desjarlais all maintained a robust fishing practice on Katepwa Lake well into the late nineteenth century.[29] Fishing may have been the primary means for the Klyne women to feed themselves and their families, but the matriarch Madeleine, with the help of her youngest son Napoleon, also farmed a small parcel of land. When Madeleine received patent to her land in 1886, she had nearly eight acres under cultivation.[30] At almost 80 years of age, Madeleine Klyne not only contributed her land to supporting the family economy, but also her labour in working with her daughters to maintaining their fishery. Her experience demonstrates that women, and in this instance, older women, contributed their skills, expertise and labour to the family food supply.

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[27] Portt et. al., *Fish Sampling*.
[28] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[29] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[30] Madeleine Klyne, Files 290.68 and 115261, Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Hunting and Snaring

Like fishing, hunting and snaring of wild game was central to the Métis diet. In the Qu'Appelle Valley, game was abundant and hunters did not have to travel very far from home to be successful. Delphine Desjarlais recalled her "Dad would go and hang snares at the top of the hill and in the coulees. Mostly for rabbits and prairie chickens," and that they "were never short of meat." Deer, rabbits, ducks, prairie chickens and even gophers fed hungry families.[31] When hunting and snaring, some Métis followed protocols respecting the relationship between humans and animal and most followed cultural traditions of sharing food among the larger extended family. When hunting ducks or large game like deer, men used guns and ammunition and often worked in small groups, much like how they fished. However, when hunting and snaring smaller game like rabbits or prairie chickens, women, and occasionally older children, commonly contributed their skills and labour.[32] It was common practice that women, particularly older women, hunt and snare wild game to feed themselves and their families. It was also the role of older women to pass on their knowledge and cultural protocols about hunting on to younger generations. Indigenous scholar Kim Anderson has written extensively about the changing roles of Indigenous women over their lifecycle and their responsibilities in cultural reproduction.[33] Anderson argues that young people were helpers of the elderly, not just recipients of care. It was often by assisting grandparents go about daily tasks such as hauling water, chopping wood or working in the gardens that young people learned of their own responsibilities in the family. This was also opportunity for teaching about growing and harvesting cycles of wild foods and vegetable gardens as well as knowledge related to plants and medicines. The relationship between young and old people in the family was crucial for passing on skills necessary for economic survival and for passing on specialized knowledge. Anderson examines the concept of "Old Lady Hunting" shared

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[31] Richardson's ground squirrels (*Urocitellus richardsonii,* formerly *Spermophilus richardsonii*, like many other ground squirrles they are colloquially called gophers. They are burrowing rodents that dig extensive underground tunnels. Their habitat stretches throughout the northern United States and western Canada. During hard times, they provided food for hungry families when there were few other options. Gail R. Michener and Josef K. Schmutz, "Richardson's Ground Squirrel's, *Spermophilus richardsonii*." http://www.albertapcf.org/rsu_docs/prairie_notes_2.pdf

[32] Snares were made from thin wire fashioned into a loop and attached to a stick. The wire loop acts like a trip wire that tightens into a noose, killing the animal when it enters the loop and trips the wire.

[33] Anderson, *Life Stages*.

with her by Métis scholar, cultural teacher and storyteller Maria Campbell. According to Campbell, it was often the grandmothers who shared lessons about hunting with their grandchildren.

> As early as three or four, children would begin to set snares and hunt for small animals under the guidance of their grandmothers. The principle behind this was that the senior lifegivers (grandmothers) should be the first to teach about taking life. This ensured respectful hunting practices and adherence to protocols that both men and women would need to follow later in life.[34]

Grandmothers taught the taboos, laws and protocols of hunting and food preparation. It was these grandmothers and the experience of 'Old Lady Hunting' that taught young people about relationships, kinship obligations, reciprocity, as well as respect, giving thanks, remembering and honoring the animals that provided nourishment.

Campbell is speaking of her own community in north central Saskatchewan but the practice of 'Old Lady Hunting' and of grandmothers or older women passing on skills and knowledge related to hunting small game also appear in oral history of Métis families in the Qu'Appelle Valley well into the mid-twentieth century. This "Old Lady Hunting" role was that which Madeline Pelletier Bourassa filled when she was, as Clark noted in 1886, "going hunting rabbits." She not only provided important resources to the family economy, she also fulfilled the complementary gendered and generational roles for a woman in her stage of life. She made her contribution to the family economy by acting as a cultural teacher and mentor, passing on to young people skills, stories, cultural teachings and knowledge of the land and environment. Older women such as Bourassa not only contributed to the family food supply but were valued by extended family for their ability to hunt and snare small game, and their efforts in educating children and passing on cultural knowledge.

As they aged, both boys and girls prepared for adulthood by learning to set snares for rabbits and other small game. Delphine Desjarlais recalled that growing up in the early '40s, it was the boys in her family that hunted rabbits.[35] In the Welsh family, both boys and girls learned to set snares.[36] Norma Welsh and her sisters Pauline Anderson and

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[34] Anderson, *Life Stages,* 147.
[35] Delphine Desjarlais, interview, 8 July 2014.
[36] Pauline Anderson, Billie Robison and Norma Welsh, interview by author, 2004, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

Billie Robison recalled that they grew up setting snares. Anderson shared a story about the first rabbit she snared and reflected on the young age at which children learned to set snares.[37] When confronted with the reality of their food source, and that she had killed a rabbit, she immediately began to cry believing she had killed the Easter Bunny.

As children aged, male children received ongoing instruction and education from their male relatives in hunting larger game. Bob Desjarlais recalled his first hunting experience with his father and uncles where he chased the deer out of the bush and into the open. According to Desjarlais, "I hunted a lot with my dad years ago, I used to go and chase the deer to my dad, my dad would go upwind, and I would go downwind. And that scared em to them, you know."[38] When the hunt was successful, it was Desjarlais' job to build a fire while his dad and uncles skinned and quartered their catch. Desjarlais then cooked the first few pieces of fresh meat and shared amongst the hunting party. Knowing this was always his responsibility, he even carried small shakers of salt and pepper in his pocket to flavor the meat.[39]

Because of the teachings and education provided by parents and grandparents, many observed traditional cultural protocols of making an offering before the hunt. Most were also cautious to take only what was necessary to feed their families and to not harvest certain animals, particularly those pregnant or having recently given birth.[40] When duck hunting, Métis hunters were prudent in taking only what was necessary despite the large number of ducks migrating through the region in the fall.[41] Desjarlais acknowledged that his father often made tobacco offerings and was careful to respect mating season, pregnant animals and their young. At the start of the hunt,

> They used to sacrifice a bit of tobacco, before when they were going out hunting, ya and I realized after…that every time my dad did that, he was successful nine times out of ten….he put it on the ground, where he's hunting, he put it on the deer tracks. Ya, [that's] how my dad used to do that.[42]

[37] Pauline Anderson, interview by author, February 10, 2010.
[38] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 3 July 2002.
[39] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 3 July 2002.
[40] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[41] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[42] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

By following these protocols, Desjarlais' father and the hunting party were acting within a Métis worldview that privileged relationships with more than just human relatives, but also included animals, the landscape and the Valley environment.

Despite the availability of game, the Métis' economic position often limited their hunting success. People were poor and had little money to purchase ammunition or necessary hunting supplies. People adapted hunting techniques, and did what they could to feed their families. Desjarlais recalled that his grandmother snared prairie chickens not with snare wire, but with horsehair when she had no shells for her gun:

> My old grandmother, you know, talking about the people being poor and not having snares and not having shells. That's you know, that's true, a lot of them didn't, so my grandmother she used to catch prairie chickens with you know, the hair of a horse's tail. That's what she used for snare. She used to make a snare with that. And then she used to take a stick and she'd bend the stick and she'd push it in the ground. And she'd hang her snare there. And you know, the first time that she did that I wasn't that big, and…next morning we went over there and she had five, five chickens. They're dead and they're hung.[43]

Unmistakably, the Métis could be resourceful in securing necessary materials to continue their subsistence food harvesting practices. George Klyne also shared a funny little tale of how the Métis adapted their hunting practice, using whatever materials were available to ensure their success. Klyne's father, Andrew Henry Klyne shared this story with him as a child in the 1930s.

> An old trapper, lived during a time when food was scarce and people were poor. The old man needed to feed his family and was intent on going out trapping. Being poor, however, he had very little snare wire, and even less to bait the snares. Using his last piece of bannock as bait, the old trapper went out into the Valley and set the snare. Returning the next morning, he found the snare untouched and the bannock gone. Frustrated but determined that the mischievous rabbit would not outsmart him, the old trapper came up with a new plan. Being ever resourceful, he decided to use pieces of the long thin laces of his high-top moccasins to bait the snare. The next morning, he again returned to check his snare. Again, the snare was untouched and the bait was gone. The rabbit had eaten the laces. Now, even more determined to outmaneuver the rabbit, the old trapper came up with a new plan. He would use the pepper from his wife's kitchen! Taking the pepper, he went out in search of a big flat rock on which to set his new trap. Finding one, he placed a small pile of pepper on the rock and then sat in wait. When the rabbit appeared he sniffed the pepper, and instantly started to

[43] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

> sneeze. The rabbit sneezed so hard that he hit his head on the rock and killed himself. And so, the poor old trapper was finally able to feed his family.[44]

Over the years, Klyne has shared multiple versions of this same story.[45] Although fictional, the story demonstrates, as does the use of horsehair as snare wire, the value of inventiveness and creativity during difficult times. It also speaks to the continued complementarity of men's and women's roles, for in George's story, it was the wife's property, the pepper from her kitchen, that ultimately made the old trapper successful.

The way the Métis continued to share the proceeds of the hunt also demonstrates this complementarity. A cultural practice carried over from the buffalo hunt decades prior, families continued to distribute the proceeds of the hunt amongst the extended family, ensuring that no one went hungry. Desjarlais recalled that his father and uncles often killed eight to ten deer that they butchered and distributed across the family. Despite the large quantity of meat necessary to keep families fed, rarely was deer meat preserved and stored. They gave fresh meat away, keeping only what they needed, sometimes only enough for two or three meals.[46]

Hunting Without a License

The urgency in consumption was not only out of concern for its spoilage or that meat preservation was labour intensive and time consuming but rather, it was in response to the increasing government surveillance and regulation of hunting and fishing activities. Unlike First Nations, Métis did not have protected hunting or fishing rights guaranteed in treaties. Instead, federal and provincial government conservation policy regulated Métis hunting and fishing activities. Into the early twentieth century, Métis hunters frequently came into conflict with government hunting regulation that prohibited hunting deer out of season or without a license.[47] Due to their poverty, and the necessity of feeding their

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[44] George Klyne, interview, 4 August 2014.; George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[45] A version of this story has recently been transcribed by Klyne's grandson Jesse Rae Archibald Barber and published. See: George Klyne, "The Trapper and the Snare," in *kisiskâciwan: Indignenous Voices From Where The River Flows Swiftly*, eds. Jesse Rae Archibald Barber (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2018), 163-164.
[46] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.; Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[47] For a discussion of game law regualtion and enforcement, see Chapter 9: Contesting Government Intervention, Regulation and Intrusion into Métis Spaces and Harvesting Livelihoods.

families, Métis hunters had few options but to hunt without a license and to disregard seasonal restrictions. The illegality of hunting without a license or out of season necessitated immediate consumption of fresh meat and prompt sharing around the family rather than preserving the meat for the future and running the risk of coming into conflict with the game wardens.[48]

Fearful of the provincial game wardens and police officers, Métis families were afraid to have stores of deer meat on hand. These Government agents were known to enter people's homes looking for such contraband.[49] Roy Poitras recounted that in his home they were always scared of the police, and his mother was afraid of having any deer meat in the home.[50] Poitras recalled his mother's fear of accepting gifts of wild meat and balancing that fear with the cultural convention of sharing and not wanting to insult the giver by turning down his gift. This could impact kinship relationships. Friends and relatives from the reserve often came to his mother's house to visit, bringing wild meat as a gift. "My mother was always scared. She'd say, 'They're going to throw us in jail! Hide that meat! We can't have that!' They were so scared, you know, of getting raided by the game warden or the cops."[51] It was legal for Treaty First Nations to possess wild meat but the same laws did not apply to Métis. Regardless, they were friends and relatives, and so they regularly brought gifts of meat and other foods when they visited. Roy's mother would never turn it down because that would be an insult. According to Roy, "you never turned nothing down because you're insulting the people. That's giving. That's the way they were raised. You don't ever insult."[52]

Consequences for hunting without a license or for the illegal possession of wild meat could be harsh. The local police usually undertook to lay charges. On one occasion, while on patrol in the Lebret area, a Field Officer with the provincial department of Natural Resources, Joseph Zépherin (J.Z.) Larocque, came across William Fisher trapping muskrats without a license (Figure 9.2). Recognizing Fisher had violated

[48] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[49] Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[50] I have used the term Michif to reflect Roy's preference as self-identifying as Michif, rather than as Métis. Roy Poitras, interview with author, 4 July 2015.
[51] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.
[52] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.

wildlife protection regulations, Larocque notified the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police Officer at Fort Qu'Appelle who laid charges. Fisher appeared before a Justice of the Peace and pled guilty. He received a fine of $10.00 plus court costs of $3.00. Unable to pay his fine, he served a fifteen-day sentence in the Regina jail.[53]

Figure 9.2: J.Z. Larocque[54]

The game guardian worked with local police to apprehend and punish those who hunted or trapped illegally and on occasion guardians, including Larocque, were sympathetic to the Métis plight and simply looked the other way when it came to hunting and trapping infractions.[55] Born and raised in the Valley, J.Z. was the son of Antoine

[53] J.Z. Laroque, Field Officer, to Commissioner John R. Hill, Department of Natural Resources, 1 May 1936, A.4.2. Correspondence with Field Offices and District Superintendents – J.Z. Baroque, Lebret, 1935-1938, NR.3 Department of Natural Resources, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[54] J.Z. Larocque, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca
[55] Following his employment with the provincial government, Larocque actively politicized Métis across southern Saskatchewan becoming one of the founders and first presidents of the Saskatchewan Métis Society. He was well respected in the community, serving as a notary public and often as an intermediary for community members when they had legal affairs that needed attention. He actively wrote and spoke publically on Métis issues and history. For more on J.Z. Larocque, see: Heather Devine, "J.Z. Larocque: A Métis Historian's Account of His Family's Experiences during the North-West Rebellion of 1885," in *Finding Directions West: Readings That Locate and Dislocate Western Canada's Past*, ed. George Colpitts and Heather Devine (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2017), 59-91.

Larocque and Rosalie Laplante. Farmers and traders, the Larocques were more affluent than their Métis kin, largely due to Antoine's business acumen, his successful farming efforts and ability to hold on to their land during difficult years. J.Z was well educated, having sold his scrip in 1909 to move to Winnipeg to get an education. Returning home to the Valley, he grew to hold a number of influential positions within the community. From 1914 to 1921 he served as an officer of the Saskatchewan Provincial Police, training that likely served him well when in 1924 he was appointed game guardian for the Qu'Appelle region. J.Z., like his father Antoine, was a life-long Liberal party supporter and a personal friend of Premier James G. Gardiner. This undoubtedly influenced J.Z.'s career appointments, providing him with steady employment throughout his career.

As game guardian, Larocque demonstrated compassion for his fellow Métis, often looking the other way when he caught them hunting illegally.[56] Formally on patrol to monitor hunting and trapping activity, he often acted benevolently towards the Métis, ensuring that the old people had enough food. Bob Desjarlais recalled a conversation between his father and the game warden. "Bill…you're going to go out [hunting], you need meat, go and get meat. And if anybody is coming this way…I'll let you know." His sympathy toward the Métis, Desjarlais noted was because Larocque "was a half-breed himself and looked after the community." On another occasion, he noted that Larocque visited again, this time in the fall. He told Desjarlais' father,

> you better go and get some more ducks there, Bill, because them old people, they need some ducks. And he looked after everybody and it was really great for Dad because the warden helped him out. But even though the game warden told Dad to go ahead and hunt, we never got more than we needed, never.[57]

Desjarlais recalled a similar story about Larocque visiting their home again one year after New Year's, where Larocque encouraged his Dad go out hunting deer to feed hungry families. "That old man …he was one of the Halfbreeds so he knew what, what these guys had to, we had to eat. And there's no way your gonna stop us from eating."[58] George Klyne recalled that when Larocque visited his family home and saw they had nothing to eat but wild meat, he did not confiscate their food. In fact, George recalled that

[56] Jimmy Larocque, interview, 10-11 January 2004.
[57] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[58] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

in many instances "he didn't say nothing because they were hungry the poor people. Well they had to eat something."[59] Just as Métis families made decisions about whether to comply with game laws, Larocque made decisions about the law's application, balancing the need for enforcement with the maintenance of kinship networks and relationships. For Larocque, and other Government agents such as Fisheries Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, people's hunger often won out over the need to enforce game laws.

In practice, Larocque acted with benevolence toward his fellow Métis, but he was also a provincial Government employee charged with the responsibility of enforcing game regulations. His records reflect these efforts and confirm oral history recollections. In July 1937, Larocque reported to his superiors that he had received a complaint of two Métis, Maurice and Fred Parisien, trapping without a license. When investigating Larocque found that both had been trapping weasels without a license. Visiting their homes, he found them each in poor economic circumstances, on municipal relief and with large families to feed. Recognizing their situation, Larcoque decided not to prosecute.[60]

In many Métis communities, it was the women who instructed hunters on the types of food needed and determined the distribution of meat across the extended family.[61] Sharing fresh meat across many households ensured quick consumption and avoided risk of spoilage. When families did have contraband meat, women worked efficiently in their homes to use the meat and bones, removing the evidence from plain site and then disposing of any remains. According to Desjarlais,

> We used to go out [hunting], but I said there, once we got home, how that meat disappeared and years ago there like the game wardens used to come down there a lot eh, and the cops they used to come, try and catch the Métis people with deer meat, but the ladies handled the guys. They were so far ahead of those fellas that never a time that they ever came to catch anybody, cause like the ladies there, once they took the meat off the bone, into the stew that bone went… And then burned everything.[62]

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[59] George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[60] J.Z. Larocque, Field Officer to Commissioner E. Forsythe, Department of Natural Resources, July 18, 1937, A.4.2. Correspondence with Field Offices and District Superintendents – J.Z. Larocque, Lebret, 1935-1938, NR.3 Department of Natural Resources, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[61] Audreen Hourie and Anne Carriére-Acco, "Métis Families," in *Métis Legacy II*, eds., Lawrence Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion and Audreen Hourie (Winnipeg and Saskatoon: Pemmican Publications, Inc. and Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2006), 53-63.
[62] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

The sharing of food fulfilled kinship responsibilities but also allowed the Métis to quickly rid themselves of any evidence they were hunting out of season or without licenses.[63]

Game law enforcement not only affected food supply but acted as a form of cultural repression. As Poitras elucidated, fear of government intervention cautioned Métis in the cultural etiquette of food reciprocity. And hunting restrictions ultimately decreased women's access to deer hides that once cleaned and tanned they used in the production of clothing and all types of decorative goods such as moccasins, mittens, jackets and coats that they sewed, beaded and embroidered for their families and for sale.[64]

Gathering

Gathered from the local environment, wild plants, when in season were readily available throughout the Valley region. Métis families gathered plants for food, for medicinal purposes and some, such as seneca root, specifically for sale. The Métis relied upon wild plants like berries, rose hips, hazelnuts and wild parsnips as well as duck, geese and mud hen eggs collected from the Valley marshes to complement the fish and wild game of their diet.

Gathering and harvesting wild plants was generally a women's activity, with the help of children and old people. However, men also contributed their labour when necessary, working together with their families as an economic unit particularly when picking berries or digging seneca root. These activities required additional labour as the environment provided a wealth of berries, ripe during a short period of time, and so required concentrated labour. During this time, all members of the family worked diligently to harvest as many as they could to eat fresh, preserve and store. Similarly, digging seneca root required additional labour because they sought to harvest a large enough quantity to ensure a profitable sale.

[63] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.; Delphine Desjarlais, interview, 8 July 2014; Bob Desjarlais, interview, 3 July 2002.
[64] Farrell Racette, "Sewing Ourselves."; Farrell Racette, "Sewing For A Living."

Plant harvesting was ongoing according to the seasonal cycle. In the spring, some women tapped maple trees to harvest the sap for syrup.[65] In 1946, J.Z. Larocque described the practice in the *Regina Leader Post*. Every spring he recalled, Mrs. Francoise Blondeau Robillard would "punch a little hole in the trunk of the tree and eventually go home with a pail of sap which she will boil down into maple sugar."[66] Taught by her mother Francoise Desjarlais Blondeau, Robillard had been making this syrup since she was a young girl and was now passing these skills on to her grandchildren. Lucy Desjarlais Whiteman, Robillard's niece and Blondeau's granddaughter, recounted that she and her sister helped their grandmother tap up to 200 maple trees in early spring so that they could make syrup.[67] Her sister Bertha also recalled the hard work children did in helping to make syrup.

> When grandma needed me for this, I would just about die. I used to haul and chop wood with a hatchet for her to boil it. Then she would hang a big pot full on the tripod. There was a hook on the pail to take it off when it boiled over. It never made as much as I expected. Sometimes only one gallon in one day and so much water! I hauled wood and water all day long. My clothes would all be torn. She would make molds with birch bark, little canoes and designs of circles and squares which she would fill with the syrup and then put out in the snow to harden.[68]

Children's labour was significant in all types of food harvesting activities, including making maple syrup and picking berries.

During the summer months, all kinds of berries lined the lakes, river, and the coulees. When picking berries, families often went out in large family groupings, for days at a time, moving within the Valley region. Lawrence Welsh described the family nature of these berry-picking excursions and his family's regular movement within the Valley region.

> …it was the entire family thing. The whole family went, when we went picking berries. Every, every year that happened. So, I mean, that's when I remembered

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[65] Maple trees found in the Qu'Appelle Valley and across the western prairies are Manitoba Maples (*Acer negundo*), not the Sugar Maples (*Acer saccharum*) commonly found in Quebec.
[66] J.Z. Larocque, "Maples Tapped for 100 Years" *Regina Leader Post*, May 9, 1946.
[67] Lucy Desjarlais Whiteman, interview with Rita Schilling, in Rita Schilling, *Gabriel's Children,* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Métis Society, Local 11, 1983) 92.
[68] Bertha Desjarlais, interview with Rita Schilling, in Rita Schilling, *Gabriel's Children*, (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Métis Society, Local 11, 1983), 92.

> camping most, down at Katepwa Lake and on the reserve, and at MacDonald's Bay on Mission Lake was where we went to pick berries.[69]

Margaret Harrison describes a similar experience where her family would go for two or three days at a time picking berries across the Valley. There was a seasonal cycle to berry picking as different kinds ripened at different times. First, it was saskatoon berries, followed by gooseberries, strawberries and raspberries. Last, it was usually chokecherries that ripened by mid-August.

> …We'd go, mother would take our lunch and dinner, we'd have lunch out there but they would pick for hours and we'd have big water pails full. We'd then be filling boxes full of berries and that was saskatoons they'd start out with. The gooseberries were the first ones, so we did have some gooseberry bushes and we'd pick those and saskatoons I guess was the next ones, and there was wild raspberries and strawberries as well. So they gathered as much of them as possible.[70]

Owing to their abundance, berries were easy to pick. All that was necessary "[was to] pull the branch down and tie it, then pluck the berries. We tied pails onto our body with a rope or a belt."[71] Children helped pick, crush or dry berries and store them for the winter.

At the same time families were picking berries, they might also have been harvesting any number of plants and medicines that grew throughout the region. Picking berries may have been the reason for moving throughout the Valley but those with specialized knowledge of plants were always on the lookout for certain plants and medicines that they knew grew only in specific places. It was generally the older women, who had knowledge of plants and medicines, but some men also possessed this knowledge. Harvesting plants for medicines was not specific to these berry-picking or seneca digging excursions. Rather Métis picked medicines on an ongoing basis, according to cultural and specialized knowledge of the plant's use. Old people who knew medicines had a very intimate and expert knowledge of their environment, knowing when, where and how to harvest specific plants.

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[69] Lawrence Welsh, with Pauline Anderson, Billie Robison, Pat Sullivan, Lawrence Welsh and Norma Welsh, interview by author, 2004, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

[70] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.

[71] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.

When gathering medicines, Bob Desjarlais recalled that his Kokum Maross often went out alone "walking all over the Valley coulees" to gather the medicines she needed. However, this wasn't necessarily always a solitary activity. Delphine Desjarlais recalled that she and her siblings often accompanied their grandmother when she picked medicines and that it was an opportunity for her to hear stories from her grandmother and to learn about plants. Regardless of how they gathered medicines, it was responsibility of those who knew medicines to share their knowledge and skills across families and the community. Bob Desjarlais recalled Kokum Maross regularly doing so, and that his family in turn shared food with her in exchange for her services.

Just as it was their responsibility to share their services, it was also the role of Old People to use these harvesting activities to share their knowledge of using and gathering these plants. These activities and the places they created were teaching and mentoring places for children to learn important cultural values and lessons as well as protocols around picking medicines, in much the same way they had learned hunting protocols. Joe Welsh recalled the importance of berry patches as places where children learned valuable lessons and learned about and followed traditional protocols.

> Before we had schools, you know, we'd go in there (berry patch) and the women would teach the kids, you know, and then there was, you taught them patience, you known everybody. We go berry picking with your kids and they pick 6 berries. Oh, my can ain't full yet. So they're, you know they have to have patience to learn, patience to pick steady and then not eat anything and then there'd be two pails. You only have to pick five more pails and you know, then the stories would come out of there.[72]

Old People shared stories and lessons on Métis worldview and the relationship between humans and the natural and spiritual worlds with children when in their places. Welsh also recalled that his Aunt Margaret always followed a traditional protocol in making an offering when picking berries. She made offerings of small candies and sweets to the Little People or the Memeguayiwahk (Ma-ma-kwa-se-sak), which she would leave on the ground near a wild crocus.

The Memeguayiwahk or Little People are supernatural beings in Cree and Michif folklore who take human form, only are very tiny. There have been sightings of the Little

[72] Joe Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.

People north of the Qu'Appelle Valley at nearby George Gordon's reserve.[73] Cree author and storyteller Eleanor Brass wrote about the Little People:

> …It was said that these May-may-quay-she-wuk were the stone workers, making arrow heads, flint knives and stone heads for hammers. These they traded with the Indians for buffalo meat, hides, porcupine quills, and other things they needed but couldn't obtain for themselves…These tiny people had mysterious powers and often played tricks on the Indians. Hence every time anything peculiar happened, they attributed it to the May-may-quay-she-wuk.[74]

According to Brass, the Cree believe that the Little People live underground, in caves or sand hills and under rocks along bodies of water.[75] They are harmless and meant to protect people. Welsh recalled hearing stories as a child that the Little People liked gifts of shiny objects and sweets, which they deserved "because one of the many things they do is take away any ticks when you are picking berries."[76] They also liked to play tricks on people and were frequently blamed when objects went missing. As a child, Norma Welsh recalled hearing stories that the Little People liked playing tricks such as untying your shoelaces when you walked in tall grass.[77] To keep the Little People from mischief, Métis made offerings of sugar, candies or tobacco in places the Little People were known to frequent. [78] Billie Robison, Norma and Joe Welsh's sister, often made an offering of the first few berries she picked, dropping them on the ground so that they would be in reach of the Little People.[79]

Food harvesting activities, like berry-picking, provided opportunity for the transmission of cultural knowledge and sharing of valuable information. Often it was in the berry-patch where girls learned valuable lessons about womanhood, and their roles in the family and community. According to Joe,

> …the women would take the children and well, the girls mostly. Well there all kinds of separation and all kinds of function to, to that culture where they talk of the women who teach the girls about growing up and what it meant to become a

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[73] Jennifer S. H. Brown and Robert Brightman, *"The Orders of the Dreamed": George Nelson on Cree and Northern Ojibwa Religion and Myth, 1823* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988), 197.
[74] Eleanor Brass, *Medicine Boy and Other Cree Tales* (Calgary: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1979), n.p.
[75] Brass, *Medicine Boy*.
[76] Joe Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.
[77] Norma Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.
[78] Lawrie Barkwell, "Métis Folklore: People, Ma-ma-kwa-se-sak or Memequayiwahk" http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14521.Métis%20Folklore.pdf
[79] Joe Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.

> woman and the duties and responsibilities that they had. Then the men would take the boys over there and you know, the bigger boys, the women always seemed to have the little children, the boys and girls. And that where the school was, in effect, before we had school, and that's where our culture is, in the berry patch.[80]

Berry-picking activities were important opportunities for women to share their cultural teachings and practical knowledge. The places where these activities happened were not only for teaching and mentoring but multi-layered in meaning and in use. Families used the same places for picking berries, medicines, plants and for hunting.

Concepts of specific individual or family territory did not define these places. Rather, multiple families used and assigned their own names and meanings to them. Often, they were named for the stories or events that took place there, or for the individuals that considered specific places their favorite berry-picking or gathering spots. In some families there was a degree of recognition and respect for places, such as berry-patches, as the private places of certain individuals. Joe and Norma Welsh articulate that in their family, there were berry-patches understood as the private places of auntie and old ladies, named for the women who considered these places their "favorite spots" but not exclusively their territory. The location of these spots was often, in jest, kept secret. Indeed, their Aunt Margaret tried to keep her berry-patch a secret, never telling anyone where she picked.[81]

Growing

Families relied on the food gathered in their seasonal activity and depended on garden produce to feed their large families. Josephine Tarr recalled they always had a big garden because, "that was our living."[82] As a result, a substantial amount of the Métis diet came from their large vegetable gardens. Families predominantly grew vegetables that kept well and stored for a long period of time, including potatoes and other root vegetables such as onions, carrots, beets and turnips. They also grew other vegetables such as lettuce, cabbage, peas, beans, corn and squash.

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[80] Joe Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.
[81] Joe Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.
[82] Josephine Tarr, interview, 27 February 1984.

Living on land that the Métis didn't own did not keep them from using all available space. Each year, they cleared and worked up any available plots of land for families to plant their gardens. It was not uncommon for families to have more than one garden with some as large as one to two acres.[83] Desjarlais recalled his grandmother, Kokum Maross, having a large and bountiful garden.

> I remember years ago when they were living down in the Valley there, you would go there and that whole bottom there used to be garden… They probably put in the better part of two acres of garden every year and grandma used to have everything. There wasn't a thing she didn't grow. Like she used to have cantaloupe and watermelon all those things hey…squash, oh lord, they used to have a great big garden and carrots, oh my lord, they used to have carrots and they used to have an acre of potatoes in because it was a big family hey. They needed lots of vegetables. And turnips, oh god, they'd grow turnips.[84]

Métis families attempted to grow as large a garden as possible but the short growing season complicated their efforts. Often there were times that gardens produced poor harvests, forcing families to go without.[85] Growing conditions were susceptible to the weather, despite being in proximity to a reliable source for watering the gardens. Often the climate made providing for their families difficult. During the 1930s, the climate affected gardening activity and forced families to rely on what they harvested from the natural environment or seek out rations from the municipal Government.[86] In times like these it was even more important that families preserve any available food for the future.

Métis poverty was intensified by their initial relocation to the road allowance and ensured that families lacked the economic means to acquire seed, tools or gardening implements. Consequently, gardeners bought only a few seeds, and were sure to collect seeds for the following year.[87] For the most part, families had few gardening tools or implements to work the soil. Margaret Harrison recalled, "Of course we didn't have the tools either, we maybe had a rake. I remember my dad breaking the ground with a horse and making furrows and having to try and crush the hard ground to make it nice and

[83] Joseph Parisien, interview with Nathan Bearl, 8 August 1983, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute. www.metismuseum.ca
[84] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[85] Caroline Henry, interview, 15 August 1982.
[86] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[87] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

frumpy so you could plant things."[88] In general, men worked the land using a team of horses when available and then the men, women and children all shared in the planting.[89] Women then tended the gardens and children helped out by pulling weeds and hauling water. Working together as a family unit, those with horses, tools and farm implements also aided extended family in getting their gardens prepared for seeding.

Preserving for the future

Just as food harvesting was a seasonal cycle, so too was its preparation and preservation. Because families were large, sizable stores of food were necessary to feed family members throughout the year. Métis women consistently harvested, prepared and preserved food. Hunted, caught, gathered or grown, if it wasn't it eaten fresh, food needed preservation, salting, smoking, drying or canning, for the winter months. Women spent a considerable amount of their time preserving and storing food. Margaret Harrison recalled that her mother, Adeline Pelletier dit Racette was always preparing for winter. "They did a lot of canning. In our house, mother was always preparing for something, preparing for winter."[90] Consequently, families relied on women's skills and labour in preserving food that they worked to hunt, gather and grow.

Women dried and canned all kinds of berries and plants to supply the family with fruit and vegetables for the upcoming seasons. Saskatoon berries and most others, except for chokecherries, required little preparation before drying. When preparing chokecherries, it was necessary to crush them, using two rocks as a type of mortar and pestle and break open their hard-interior pit. Harrison recalled that chokecherry crushing was often an extended family activity where women and children worked together.

> Sometimes we have a little crushing bee you know. Grandma and some of the family around would come over and they'd all have their crushing stones, and they'd sit around and somebody would make tea, and they'd crush these chokecherries.[91]

Working together broke up the monotony of repetitive tasks, offered an opportunity for women to socialize while working and helped to maintain and reinforce kinship

[88] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[89] George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[90] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[91] Norma Welsh, interview, 7-8 February 2004.

relationships. Women crushed the chokecherries and formed into small patties placed them on large sheets or tablecloths to dry in the sun. After two or three days, the dried berries were ready for storage. Delphine Desjarlais recalled that they placed the crushed chokecherry patties on a sheet, tablecloth or piece of canvas high up on the roof of the porch, shed or house undisturbed to dry. Once dry, berries were stored in gunnysacks or canvas bags. When ready to be prepared, the berries were fried with flour, lard, and sugar into a paste, called li grens, that they ate as part of regular meals.

If glass sealers were available, women also canned a large quantity of fruit, stewed with sugar in their own juice. Harrison recalled that her mother canned up to one hundred jars of saskatoon berries each year because it was necessary to have enough to feed the family through the winter.[92] Women processed berries into jam, jelly or syrup if small jars or tins were available. Margaret recalled that they considered less abundant berries like strawberries or pin cherries as more precious than the plentiful saskatoon berries or chokecherries and so they saved strawberry or pin cherry jam or jelly for special occasions. "There were little jars of strawberries, I remember, they were just so precious to them because they were such tiny berries, if you got three or four jars you were really lucky. They were kept for Christmas, and for New Year's basically."[93]

Families also commonly smoked and dried meat and canned rabbit and fish. They cut meat into long thin strips and hung it outside on stages to dry in the sun or smoked over a fire. They ate the meat once it dried, and often pounded and fried dry meat with lard and berries like when making pemmican. Women also canned large quantities of meat if glass jars or used tin cans were available. Bob Desjarlais remembered that his mother often saved large tin cans for storing meat and that feeding their large family for the winter required up to 300 large jars of meat.[94] Women did not regularly can deer meat because of their fear of the game wardens or police catching them with illegally hunted meat.

Women prepared fish fresh, and preserved it by smoking, drying and canning. For drying and smoking, the fish was cut open and hung flat to dry on ropes or wire or on

[92] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[93] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[94] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

stages built outside or in a small outbuilding. Fished dried in the sun, or it dried and smoked over a low fire. Delphine Desjarlais noted that they often dried their fish outside on ropes and wire, strung up like a clothesline.[95] Margaret Harrison recalled that her grandfather had a smokehouse, that he called a hanger, where he hung the fish to dry. Her grandmother also used the smokehouse to dry perch.[96] The smokehouse had rows of poles and wire strung up high across the shed to hang the fish for smoking and drying. It also served as a tool shed and a place to store dried food. Once dry, fish was stored in canvas or burlap bags. Women also preserved fish, canning it in sealed jars in a brine made of salt and vinegar. Many remember their mothers also canning fish eggs and preserving whitefish and suckers with vinegar and ketchup to make the fish turn pink, resembling salmon. [97]

Women used salt to preserve fish and meat such as pork, beef or chicken that families may have received from their farmer employers. They also used sugar to preserve fruit and vinegar and salt to make a brine for pickling vegetables and preserving fish. They used wax to seal jars of fish eggs, jam, jelly or syrup and to cover root vegetables such as turnips. Covering turnips in wax helped prolong their shelf life. They also used lard to seal food in jars or tins.[98] They purchased most of these items, salt, sugar, vinegar and wax, with cash.

If storing fresh food for any length of time it needed to remain cold. Many families used underground root cellars to store garden produce, meat or dried and canned goods. They also may have used a well to keep butter, cream and milk cold. Joseph Blondeau recalled that they had a cellar dug in the ground under the house to store vegetables because "we didn't have fridges or deep freezes."[99] Dark, damp and underground, root cellars stayed cold using ice cut from the Qu'Appelle Lakes.[100] Root cellars with ice covered and packed in sawdust were cold enough to store meat for quite a few months.[101] However, not all families were fortunate enough to have a root cellar or a

[95] Delphine Desjarlais, interview, 8 July 2014.
[96] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[97] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 6-7 December 2003.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.; Joseph Moran, interview, 22 August 1983.
[98] Delphine Desjarlais, interview, 8 July 2014.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[99] Joseph Blondeau, interview, 19 August 1982.
[100] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.
[101] Norma Welsh, interview by author, February 16, 2014.

well for cold storage. Having no cold storage available significantly limited the quantity of food stored and placed families in a precarious position.

Feeding the Family

For Métis families, everyday meals were simple and basic. The simplicity of everyday meals however, was not because Métis families did not enjoy cooking or could not cook more extravagant meals, but due to their limited means they did not necessarily work with many different ingredients. Despite being poor, and sometimes having very little, people were generous with what they did have. Most Métis cooks also had little space in which to work. Métis houses were small and cramped because of large families, and designed with collective living, working and sleeping spaces in mind, rather than with separate spaces or rooms.[102] This left little room for a kitchen, or for preparing meals. As a result, kitchen space was small and not well equipped. Most had a simple wood stove, wood box, water pail, hand-made table and chairs or benches and a humble cupboard for limited food storage and cooking and eating utensils. In the heat of the summer, much of the food preparation and cooking took place outside, using a wood stove moved outside specifically for that purpose, or sometimes over an open fire.[103] In some instances, families may also have had an outbuilding or lean-to for cooking which they referred to as a summer kitchen.[104]

Soups and stews were a very common meal, made with simple and often limited ingredients. Soups and stews were economical and fed large families. They could also feed a few more mouths with the addition of a few extra vegetables or pieces of meat. Women kept soups and stews on the stove so that they would be readily available when people were hungry or when visitors came. In many Métis homes, "the soup was always on," reinforcing the cultural convention of hospitality and sharing. [105]

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[102] David V. Burley, Gayel A. Horsfall, and John D. Brandon, *Structural Considerations of Métis Ethnicity: An Archaeological, Architectural and Historical Study* (Vermillion, SD: The University of South Dakota Press, 1992).
[103] Norma Welsh, interview, 2004.
[104] Saskatchewan Homestead Files, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. A review of homestead files for the area demonstrates that several families had outbuildings identified as summer kitchens.
[105] John Arcand, personal communication, January 15, 2017.

Soups, and stews were a hearty meal, made from available meat and vegetables in a bone broth, with a handful or two of dried berries added for flavor. Made from rabbit, prairie chicken, or dried meat, rubabou was a popular dish of meat boiled in a thick broth with onions, carrots, potatoes and other vegetables.[106] Soup made with duck, fish or dried meat was popular as was a soup called les boulettes. Métis cooks made les boulettes from ground or minced meat formed into small meatballs and seasoned with onion and salt and pepper and cooked in boiling water with potatoes and onions. Served with fried bannock or li beignes, this meal loosely translates from Michif as "the bullets and the bang." Métis made li beignes with yeast in a bread dough unlike the unleavened bannocks that was also a staple in their households. Li beignes are like a deep-fried donut, an English fritter or the French pastry, les beignets, which is where the Métis derived the Michif name. When making li beignes, they rolled out the dough and cut it in a square, making one or two cuts made down the centre of the dough so that it would cook evenly. Sometimes they twisted the cut dough pieces before immersing it in hot oil. French beignets are generally covered in confectioners' sugar while the Métis version was often not. In his memoirs, Norbert Welsh, the great grandfather of Norma Welsh and her siblings, referred to these pastries as croxegnols or croquignoles.[107] Les boulettes and li beignes were a favorite dish served on holidays and special occasions.

Métis families also ate meat that had been prepared by boiling, roasting or frying. Norma Welsh and her sisters Pauline Anderson and Billie Robison recalled a dish their mother made called tarreaux. Made with dried meat, fat and berries, tarreaux was a variation of the traditional pemmican.[108] When she made tarreaux, she mixed dried meat with lard and either fried or cooked it the oven until crispy then added dried berries to form a paste.[109] Agnes Pelletier also recalled making a pemmican this way, but that they used fried pork fat mixed with berries or sometimes even raisins.[110] They also ate rabbit, seasoned with salt and pepper and boiled, fried or cooked in a pie. Meat pies were a

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[106] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014; Billie Robison, interview with Leah Dorion, 15 March 2000, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca ; Agnes Pelletier, interview, 30 May 2003.
[107] Weekes, *Last Buffalo Hunter*, 110.
[108] Payment, *Free People,* 49.
[109] Norma Welsh, 16 February 2014.
[110] Agnes Pelletier, interview, 30 May 2003.

Métis favorite, including tourtiere, a savory meat pie of French origin made with minced meat. They also roasted duck and prairie chicken, often serving it with bread stuffing. Some recall that during hard times they even ate gophers.[111] These they roasted whole, outside on a stick over an open fire or in the oven, after first singeing off the hair.

The abundance of fish was prepared in a multitude of ways, often dependent upon the type of fish. Métis cooks prepared whitefish fried, baked or in soup and smaller fish, like perch, they baked whole.[112] When frying fish, they left the skin and fins intact so that when fried they would be crisp. Prepared this way, fish was a favorite of many. Margaret recalled,

> They would fry the fins too and we would eat them and it would just be like chips, it would be crispy. So, we would eat those as well. I remember we wanted the fins, that was the big thing from the jackfish particularly, not from pickerel but we always ate them from the jackfish. Yes, it fried up nice when you would scale it and my mother could clean fish really well.[113]

Baked fish was also prepared with the skin left on, particularly small fish like perch because it would save the time and effort of cleaning and filleting the small fish. There would also be very little meat wasted when prepared this way. Billie Robison remembered, "if it was perch, we used to bake it in the oven whole like that [and then] open them up and peel the skin back and eat the eggs and everything."[114] Many considered fish eggs a bit of a delicacy. Margaret recalled gathering and eating fish eggs from a burbot, which they referred to as dogfish. "We ate lots of fish. But you know, it was a treat to have those eggs in the winter because you didn't have them through the summer at all. It was what you'd kind of looked forward to having those, the dogfish eggs."[115] Burbot, or dogfish, she described as a brown, ugly looking, bottom dweller with a long tail like an eel. She and her brother fished regularly for them so they could harvest the intact egg sac. The eggs were prepared fresh by frying in lard, or canned for later consumption.[116]

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[111] Josephine Tarr, interview, 27 February 1984.; Mary Desnomie, interview by author, 23 February 2010.; Norma Welsh, interview, 16 February 2014.; Margaret Harrison, 12 February 2010.
[112] Billie Robison, interview, 15 March 2000.
[113] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[114] Billie Robison, interview, 15 March 2000.
[115] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.
[116] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.

Bannock, or li galette, an unleavened bread made with flour and lard, was a staple in Métis households and served with nearly every meal. If times were tough and food scarce, it was often the only thing Métis families had to eat. Some women also made a lot of bread if the ingredients and supplies were available. Norma Welsh's mother made at least 15 loaves of bread a week to feed their growing family.[117] Many preferred bannock because it was easier to make than bread, and took less time and fewer ingredients.

Although most of the foods Métis families ate were prepared with ingredients harvested from the natural environment, they also purchased and traded for staple items such as flour, baking powder and soda, sugar, tea, salt and pepper and sometimes canned milk or canned meat. Tea was particularly important, as the Métis always served a cup of hot tea with every meal and it was, like a pot of soup or piece of bannock, always ready and offered to company. Staple items were available from merchants in the immediate vicinity at Lebret, Indian Head and Balcarres, which the Métis purchased on credit and paid with cash received from their employers.[118] Into the 1920s and '30s, as Métis poverty intensified with the Depression, limited staple goods were also provided by the municipality as relief rations.[119] However, the bulk of staple items consumed by Métis families came from the farmers or settlers who employed them.[120]

As farm labourers, Métis also sporadically had access to beef and pork, as well as eggs, milk and cream that they received in exchange for their labour. Joe Parisien recalled that they often traded cordwood to farmers for eggs, chicken or other meat.[121] When farmers were ready to butcher, farm hands helped, as did their wives, again demonstrating the way in which Métis families worked as an economic unit. Margaret recalled her mother and grandmother assisting with butchering.

> My mother and grandmother would go help the farm ladies butcher cows… …When they did butcher, they'd go to grandma's place. They'd have big tubs and would make blood sausage and use the stomach of the cow. That is the worst smelling stuff that you'd wanna be around, so you could never forget. These people loved it, my aunt would kill for that stuff in later years because they didn't have it. I don't think they left anything out except the squeak of the pork. They

[117] Norma Welsh, interview, 2004.
[118] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.
[119] Relief Records 1921-1955, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, R2.739, Provincial Archive of Saskatchewan.
[120] Bob Desjarlais, interview, 15 May 2002.
[121] Joseph Parisien, interview, 8 August 1983.

> used every part of it that they could possibly use. It was important to prepare and have things ready.[122]

When they did get meat from farmers, they adapted their menu and processed it in different ways than the wild game they regularly ate, making dishes like blood sausage and head cheese.[123] From the milk and cream families received, women would make their own butter and they would often can the beef and pork.[124] One of the most important items families received from butchering however, was pork fat which they cooked down and rendered to make lard. They used lard made from other meat fats but preferred lard made from pork fat, especially if it was for baking, cooking and spreading on bannock.[125] Harrison recalled the women making a treat called "cretons." They made these with finely chopped pork, cooked with fat and roasted in the oven until crispy.[126] Her family referred to them as "cracklins" and sometimes served them sprinkled with sugar.[127]

Fruit other than that grown in the local environment was available from local merchants, or seasonally from itinerant produce merchants. Merchants carried fruit such as dried apples, figs and raisins year-round while fresh fruit was available seasonally. Norma Welsh and Pauline Anderson, however, remember getting bananas and fresh apples in season as a special treat.[128] Fresh fruit was cost prohibitive, even in season. As a result, few could afford fresh fruit, so if they were to purchase fruit, purchased only that which was ripe or overripe. Roy Poitras recalled that his mother sometimes was able to purchase overripe pears or prunes which she canned for the winter.[129] Similarly, Margaret Harrison recalled her mother purchasing overripe figs and bananas from a merchant that peddled his produce through the Valley. They purchased this fruit by trading discarded bottles they had collected. She recalled,

> …the thing was we'd go and get those pop bottles you know and because the fruit man would be coming on Sundays. We had this little truck that came from Fort Qu'Appelle I think and he would come maybe once a month or something like that in the summer. And we'd look forward to that because we'd be getting fresh

[122] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 24, 2014.
[123] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 24, 2014.
[124] Norma Welsh, interview, 2004.
[125] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 24, 2014.
[126] Diane Payment, *Free People,* 49.
[127] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 24, 2014.
[128] Norma Welsh and Pauline Anderson, interview, 2004.
[129] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.

> fruit. Well, fresh we thought, but it really wasn't fresh…But we would save our bottles and he had this cute little red van, like it was a little truck and he'd pull up by the highway. We had a highway beside, well we were road allowance people, so we lived right by the highway, we didn't have far to go…But this fruit man, we would have our bottles ready, you know, and everybody, everybody would be coming, everybody comes down to the fruit truck, and yah, it was really a special time too.[130]

Overwhelmingly, Métis families rarely engaged in a cash economy, instead bartering or trading with foods they harvested, or goods such as discarded bottles that they collected and used as currency.

Sharing of Food

Sharing of food was a way to bring people together, making it an integral part of all Métis gatherings and celebrations. Families looked after one another, and shared food and resources with family members who had less. This included making sure that old people in the family had enough to eat. This sharing of food was a critical means of acknowledging and maintaining kinship relationships and responsibilities. The social aspect of sharing your home, food and making guests feel welcome was important. Even when visiting others in their homes, Métis always took food along. Harrison recalled that families "helped one another in that sense, you always took something along be it extra meat, canned meat, canned chickens."[131]

For Métis families visiting, dancing, music and feasting were inseparable. They frequently held dances in peoples' homes, with the furniture pushed aside or moved out, making room for dancing. Local fiddle players played long into the night as Métis families danced the Red River jig, the reel of four, the reel of eight, the duck dance, the rabbit dance and other traditional dances. Roy Poitras recalled that dances, pie socials and card playing occurred frequently in their home, except during Lent. When company came, his mother always cooked for visitors. Even if it was just a simple soup, tea and bannock, it was the hospitable act of sharing food that was important. "We were poor, but I thought we were rich, because when company came we always had lots of food."[132]

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[130] Adeline Pelletier dit Racette and Margaret Harrison, interview, 23-24 May 2002.
[131] Margaret Harrison, interview, 24 February 2014.
[132] Roy Poitras, interview, 4 July 2015.

Sharing of food was a part of these activities and helped renew and strengthen the bonds of family.

Le Jour d'An – Holidays and Special Occasions

Holiday celebrations centred on New Year's rather than Christmas. Carried over from the winter camps of the mid-to-late nineteenth century, the tradition of celebrating New Year's continued well into the mid-twentieth century. In Qu'Appelle road allowance communities, families visited with extended family members at New Year's, sharing food, visiting and dancing. Visiting started in early morning New Year's Day, beginning by first visiting the family's oldest members. When they arrived, each received a blessing from the family patriarch before sharing a meal and then moving on to the next house. This celebrating continued until Epiphany or All Kings Day on January 6.[133] At each house, tables overflowed with food prepared for the occasion, including dishes of les boulettes and li beignes, li grens, la pouchine au sac, tourtiere, pies, cakes and cookies. La pouchine au sac is a pudding made with finely chopped suet, flour, milk, brown sugar, raisins and currants, steamed in a cotton bag and served with a sweet rum sauce.[134] George Klyne and Bob Desjarlais recalled that women all made fruit cakes for New Year's celebrations.[135] They made cakes up to a month prior, that they stored wrapped in a tight cloth until the New Year's celebrations began. Often, there was even a friendly competition over who made the best cakes.[136]

Among the Métis, New Year's was a celebration of feasting, visiting and dancing. Agnes Pelletier described these celebrations as she remembered them from the late 1940s or early 50s. These were social times with always a lot of food to share, despite being poor. In some instances, these celebrations also included alcohol or li piquette. She recalled the food and festivities favourably:

> We sure had a lot of fun when New Year's came around. We used to eat, have a little bit to drink. We had a lot of fun on New Year's, and we went around

[133] Epiphany is a Catholic holiday celebrated January 6 to mark the coming of the three wise men to visit the baby Jesus.
[134] Audreen Hourie, Anne Carriére-Acco, Lawrence Barkwell, and Leah Dorion, "Métis Foods," in *Métis Legacy II,* eds. Lawrence Barkwell, Leah M. Dorion, and Audreen Hourie (Winnipeg and Saskatoon: Pemmican Publications, Inc. and Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2006) 130.
[135] Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.
[136] Bob Desjarlais and George Klyne, interview, 6-7 December 2003.

> visiting, and this was how we celebrated for seven days from January 1st to 7th. And I don't know where they got all the groceries or all the food, but they seemed to manage…they used to make meatballs and they'd make pies. You'd have raisin pie, prune pie. They used to also cook the apricots first and then they'd make them in the form of a pie. We used to also eat crushed chokecherries. They used to also make pemmican…and some people would put saskatoons or they would put some raisins in the pemmican. They would dry the saskatoons and would use in the place of currants. When they crushed the chokecherries in it they also used to make a pudding. They put flour and water, and this was how they'd thicken it, and this was how you made your pudding.[137]

Similarly, J.Z. Larocque described the celebration of New Year's or, Le Jour d'An among the Métis at Qu'Appelle in the *Regina Leader Post* in 1948 and 1955. According to Larocque, Le Jour d'An was an annual custom celebrated by Métis families for almost 200 years:

> Not only are visits in order but it is almost an unwritten law that all children and grandchildren gather around the head of the family to pay him homage and to eat at his board. For this day the Métis cuisiniere puts forth all her skill in preparing such appealing dishes as pemmican, la potine [dumplings] and de beigne croche. It was also a custom at early dawn for the patriarch to invoke the blessing of heaven upon the numerous offering kneeling around him.
>
> After this solemn ceremony the whole carefree brood would enter upon a course of enjoyment and dancing which continued until the feast of Epiphany.[138]

In 1948, Larocque described a similar New Year's celebration as a larger community gathering celebrated across extended families. The Métis, he noted, had been blessed with "mild weather, and their financial condition was somewhat improved by having good gardens and a fair crop of wild berries."[139] The function, Larocque described, was simple, "but nevertheless an enthusiastic one for most of the old-time dwellers were able to attend, to enjoy their native foods, les beignes croche, et les bolletts [les boulettes]."[140] The celebration began after those present observed a period of silence and prayer for three members of the community, Melanie Delorme, aged 92; Mrs. Francois Desmarais; and, Simon Desjarlais, aged 77, that had passed away over the last year. At age 102, Elise

[137] Agnes Pelletier, interview, 30 May 2003.
[138] Joseph Z. Larocque, "Traditional Religious Theme for Métis Yule Observance," *Regina Leader Post*, 24 December 1955.
[139] Joseph Z. Larocque, "Métis celebrate Le Jour d'l'An," *Regina Leader Post,* 8 January 1948.
[140] Joseph Z. Larocque, "Métis celebrate Le Jour d'l'An," *Regina Leader Post,* 8 January 1948.

Klyne Kavanaugh acted as the matriarch of the event and with St. Pierre Blondeau sat at the head table to receive visitors. Other "old-timers" in attendance were Adolphice Pelletier, Peter Desjarlais, Mrs. Zacharie Blondeau, Mrs. Francoise Blondeau Robillard, Francoise Desmarais and Mrs. Rene Page. St. Pierre Blondeau recounted stories of hunting buffalo on the plains, followed by several short speeches before the fiddle playing and dancing began. The evening closed with benediction or blessings from the patriarchs.[141]

For Métis families in the Qu'Appelle Valley, sharing of food was integral to how they understood and reinforced their kinship relationships. Visiting solidified the act of food sharing and was an important part of all social activities. Visiting was not just for having fun, dancing, playing cards and gossiping, but was important in maintaining relationships, working out family and community differences and checking in on one another. It was through these social activities that families honoured their old people, recounted their history and expressed a worldview in which the sharing of food amongst kin was foundational. At New Year's in particular, these celebrations ensured that all families would have enough to eat and could take part in the family and community festivities, even if their own pantries might be bare.

Conclusion

On the road allowance Métis worked hard to feed their families. All members of the family contributed their labour, often working as a family unit in harvesting the natural environment and producing the foods necessary. In this economic unit, women worked diligently in harvesting, growing and preserving food for their families, while children learned at a young age how to contribute to the family economy. Their work was crucial to the survival of the immediate and extended family as food played a significant role in maintaining and reinforcing kinship relationships and obligations.

The Métis did not engage in a cash economy to any great extent but harvested or produced for themselves the foods they required. They also traded and bartered for additional staple items, often using their labour in place of currency. Regardless, they harvested, prepared and preserved as much as they could despite economic limitations,

[141] Joseph Z. Larocque, "Métis celebrate Le Jour d'l'An," *Regina Leader Post,* 8 January 1948.

using food to socialize and celebrate events important to them. The sharing of food remained a well-recognized cultural convention among Métis families, despite their poverty.

Over the course of their lives, women's role in the family evolved, but the respect they garnered for their wisdom, skills and expertise did not diminish. Rather, older women held respected positions, acting as community matriarchs and valued for their cultural and practical knowledge related to land use and the Valley environment. Women, including older women, played a significant role in cultural reproduction and knowledge transmission, ensuring that children learned important skills and lessons. This was necessary if they were to be successful in engaging in a subsistence lifestyle that aligned with Métis worldview. This included the transmission of stories, values and lessons that privileged reciprocal obligations and responsibilities to the natural environment and to animal and human relations. These kinship relationships and responsibilities were central to how the Métis understood themselves in this space.

Chapter Ten: Contesting Government Intervention, Regulation and Intrusion into Métis Spaces and Harvesting Livelihoods

In late summer 1885, two Métis women courageously appeared before a local Justice of the Peace charging a local farmer with assault and challenging the same legal system that had found Métis leader, Louis Riel guilty of treason just weeks earlier. A physical altercation with a neighbouring farmer, known only in the Qu'Appelle *Vidette* newspaper account as "Mr. white", prompted their appearance. The farmer had approached the women who were harvesting berries on his land. Challenging the trespassing women, he upset their pail of berries. One of the women responded by "pulling out a handful of whiskers [while] the other tried to hit him on the head with a stick." Ten days later, still upset by what had transpired, the women charged their aggressor with assault. The case was heard before a local Justice of the Peace, and was reported on by the local newspaper. According to their account, the women did "not agree on several material points, the defendant having been alone, and no half breed to witness on his behalf the marks of ill-usage, which he showed his worship, going for nothing. He was fined $5 and $9.50 costs, or fifteen days in gaol."[1] Rather than concentrating on the actions of both parties and what transpired, the newspaper sympathized with the accused, focusing on the racial divide between the Métis and settler community proclaiming that "it appears the half breeds are to be protected against the white in this district with a vengeance." Indeed, two weeks later, the outcome of the case was again described in the newspaper, when "Mr. white" refused to pay his fine or costs, and consequently was taken to Regina "where it [was] expected that he [would] be accommodated with a couple weeks' board and lodging at expense of the Government."[2] This account reveals that Métis had access to a justice system that aspired to upholding the rule of law and equal treatment under the law but also exposed the racial tension and prevailing public prejudice they faced. Métis actions remained fresh in the public mind, particularly in southern Saskatchewan as Métis leader, Louis Riel was found guilty of treason in a Regina court only weeks before these women pursued their case. Their

[1] "Local Happenings," *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, August 27, 1885.
[2] "Local Happenings," *Qu'Appelle Vidette*, November 5, 1885.

willingness to pursue legal action demonstrates the actions Métis were willing to take to protect themselves and their livelihoods in a changing social order. It also shows the impact of reconfiguring Métis places as private settler spaces which happened with the provision of homesteads under the Dominion Lands Act, and Métis persistence in continuing their subsistence practices despite the risks they faced in coming into conflict with settlers, government and law-makers.

Qu'Appelle Métis, like these two women, acted in individual and collective ways in their everyday lives to challenge and resist settler colonialism, oppressive government policy and criminalization of their livelihoods. In the late nineteenth century, conservation efforts and protection of game and fish resources intensified and Métis increasingly faced government intervention and regulation in accessing these much relied upon resources. The imposition of fish and game regulation created conflict over the resources and disrupted local economies and livelihoods. Regulation enforcement often manifested as a clash between state agents and Métis subsistence harvesters. For Métis who relied on fish and game to feed their families, they found their subsistence activities criminalized. In response, they individually and collectively acted in both overt and covert ways to resist increasing government control and regulation of their lives. They continued to regularly petition all levels of government as they had in the 1870s, not for recognition of their land rights but for continued and increased access to food resources. They modified harvesting practices and patterns to skirt regulation and evade government agents, and closely monitored activity of local agents charged with enforcing conservation regulations. These actions demonstrated Métis insistence on maintaining their food harvesting practices and family and community responsibilities despite increased government intrusion.

Following Confederation, Euro-Canadian settlement and regulation, intervention and surveillance efforts on the part of municipal, provincial and Federal Governments increasingly affected prairie Métis. The survey of the Qu'Appelle Valley in 1882, the failure of Métis petitions to the Federal Government and subsequent settlement redefined Métis land holdings as colonial, agricultural and settler spaces. When combined with increased Government regulation of fish and game resources, legitimate uses of the environment were redefined affecting Métis access and availability of reliable food

sources. In effect, government intervention and conservation efforts created private settler spaces and a highly ordered environment out of places where Métis families harvested foods and medicines. As a result, families increasingly came under the watchful eye of colonial agents and settlers and suspicion and racism shaped their interactions. Métis resource users met and resisted these challenges as they struggled to maintain their subsistence economy in an environment that increasingly oppressed, regulated and criminalized their harvesting activities.

Nineteenth Century Conservation Efforts in Western Canada

The Canadian state introduced wildlife conservation and preservation measures immediately following Confederation. By this time, federal, provincial and territorial legislators already had a well-developed frame of reference for the development of such measures influenced by British ideas and values of hunting and sportsmanship.[3] Canadian conservation policy regarding game and fisheries management began in earnest in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Historian Janet Foster contends that such policy began in an undefined way because Government was slow to realize the importance of conservation and preservation efforts.[4] According to Foster, lack of government concern resulted from various factors, including the belief in the superabundance of wildlife and ideas about the presence of a wilderness frontier; the National Policy's focus on exploitation and development of lands and resources; and, the terms of the British North America Act, which positioned natural resources under provincial jurisdiction.[5] Throughout this period, however, the Federal Government retained control over public lands and natural resources in the North-West Territories Similarly, environmental historian Tina Loo argues that conservation policies enacted in Western Canada were both fragmented and locally based. Individuals or various interest groups, such as the Hudson's Bay Company or hunting and fishing clubs, interested in conserving wildlife

[3] For more on the influence of British values of hunting and wildlife on Canadian conservation and wildlife regulation see: Tina Loo, *States of Nature* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006).; Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840-1870* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007).; Brian Calliou, "Losing the Game: Wildlife Conservation and the Regulation of First Nations Hunting in Alberta, 1880 - 1930." (Master of Law thesis, University of Alberta, 2007).
[4] Janet Foster, *Working for Wildlife: The Beginning of Preservation in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978),3.
[5] Foster, *Working for Wildlife*, 4.

resources for subsistence, commercial and recreational purposes, initially carried out these measures.[6]

Government agencies and conservationists perceived wildlife in Western Canada as "abundant, self-regulating and self-perpetuating" requiring little protective legislation.[7] They used these ideas of wildlife abundance, or "superabundance" to promote western expansion and exert control over Indigenous economies. Historian George Colpitts argues that it was in this new era of Canadian expansion that the west "underwent a change in image from a fur trade hunting ground to a settler garden, [and] wildlife gained new imaginative value."[8] Predicated on the idea of superabundance, wildlife was promoted as a metaphor describing the richness of the west's natural resources, the abundance of which "maintained a regional understanding of the land as Eden."[9] Similarly, Doug Owram argues that during the nineteenth century, Canadian expansionist ideas of the North-West changed from that of an inhospitable wilderness dominated by the fur trade to a rich agricultural garden, images of which were used to meet the goals of rapid western expansion and development.[10] In this new era, game was a resource to be both exploited and protected until wilderness could be replaced by a developing agricultural economy.

Consequently, there was little concern for conservation and preservation policy until the late nineteenth century when, as Janet Foster argues, government thinking began to shift.[11] These conservation efforts focused on hunting control and the assertion of state control over wildlife populations and subsistence-based communities. Indeed, as Colpitts notes, "early conservationists aimed to preserve certain fish and game, and, in doing so, to exclude certain groups from fishing or hunting them."[12] Regulations set out morally and legally acceptable methods and types of hunting. Historian Tina Loo maintains that this wildlife legislation was directed toward the conservation of species, particularly those that safeguarded the long-term survival of animals in order to ensure their

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[6] Loo, *States of Nature*, 6.
[7] Foster, *Working for Wildlife*, 8-9.
[8] Colpitts, *Game in the Garden,* 39.
[9] Colpitts, *Game in the Garden*, 165.
[10] Owram, *Promise of Eden.*
[11] Foster, *Working for Wildlife*, 13.
[12] Colpitts, *Game in the Garden*, 67.

continued subsistence, commercial or recreational use by humans.[13] In effect, Loo contends, that from its beginning, conservation policy and wildlife management efforts marginalized local customary uses of wildlife, aiding in the colonization of rural Canada.[14] Similarly, Brian Calliou argues that these rules however did not reflect Indigenous peoples' year-round reliance on wildlife for their food economies.[15] Instead, the Dominion Government quickly began to impose hunting and fishing regulations through incorporation of restrictive provisions into the numbered treaties. The Government also began to generally legislate overhunting, regulate access to game limits, set closed seasons and seasonal limits as well as set out permitted hunting methods and restrictions.

The imposition of these types of policies was a means of state control over Indigenous peoples and their hunting practices. John Sandlos contends in his study of the Northwest Territories in the twentieth century, that increased state conservation measures and surveillance efforts represented a direct threat to Indigenous peoples' cultural and economic livelihoods and thus, altered their relationships with the environment.[16] State intervention increased while Indigenous control and access to resources gradually eroded, affecting traditional hunting activities as well as community, kinship and social relationships within and between Indigenous communities. Indigenous hunters however, found ways to resist the conflict created by state intrusion into their livelihoods, responding by writing letters and petitioning Government and by simply refusing to abide by game laws and regulations. Similarly, Karl Jacoby argues that as American lawmakers redefined legitimate uses of the environment in the Adirondack Mountains during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, they were met with social unrest and resistance by resource users reacting to the criminalization of their activities.[17] The state assumed that locals would embrace conservation measures when, in fact, they strongly resisted increased state intervention. Indigenous peoples continuing harvesting subsistence

[13] Loo, *States of Nature*, 4-6.
[14] Loo, *States of Nature*, 6
[15] Calliou, "Losing the Game," 155.
[16] John Sandlos, *Hunters at the Margins: Native People and Wildlife Conservation in the Northwest Territories* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008).
[17] Karl Jacoby, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.)

resources despite imposed state regulation, albeit in often clandestine ways. Consequently, state agents labeled them as squatters, poachers and thieves in the eyes of conservation law enforcement.

Late Nineteenth Century Fish and Game Legislation

Although the *British North America Act, 1867*, included no formal legislation over the care and protection of game resources, "wildlife", as part of the country's vast natural resources, fell within the Dominion's legislative authority and responsibility.[18] The Canadian Parliament maintained exclusive jurisdiction over marine and inland fisheries, including powers to enact fisheries management legislation in the *BNA Act*. Both provincial and territorial legislators dealt with game regulation, while the Federal Government dealt with fisheries separately through the Fisheries Act, 1868. Operationalized through the new Department of Marine and Fisheries, the Act applied to both ocean and inland fishing and regulated fishing seasons, net sizes and set limits on catches. Initially, the Act applied only to fishing in the eastern Canadian provinces, but as settlement advanced across the prairies, so too did the federal application and enforcement of legislation. The Federal Government maintained control over prairie fisheries until 1930.

In 1875, the Federal Government delegated authority over game resources to the territorial North-West Council.[19] A series of Ordinances, which underwent revision and amendment over time, dealt with regulations. These Ordinances set out seasons on big game such as elk, caribou, antelope and deer; birds and waterfowl such as swans, geese, ducks, grouse, partridge, and prairie chicken; as well as seasons on other fur-bearing animals such as otter, beaver, fisher and muskrats. Later Ordinances also included provisions that restricted the disturbing, injuring or gathering of wildfowl eggs. Consequences for violating these regulations, even being in possession of any bird or animal during the closed season could result in a fine ranging from $5.00 to $50.00 or a jail sentence of up to two months. Game Guardians had the authority to enforce game Ordinances, including the ability to search personal property. Often, North-West

[18] Foster, *Working for Wildlife*, 8.
[19] Waiser, "Legislator's View," 255.

Mounted Police officers acted as ex-officio game guardians with the authority to enforce the regulations. Conversely, provisions also allowed an individual in need to take any animal or bird to satisfy immediate want. The provisions however included no criteria "immediate want" suggesting it was likely determined at the discretion of the game guardian.[20]

With the creation of the province of Saskatchewan in 1905, the Federal Government retained jurisdiction over lands and resources while the province received authority over fur-bearing and game animals.[21] As Anthony Gulig asserts, the Federal Government retained control over what it felt most valuable for facilitating western settlement and turned the remainder over to the province.[22] In 1930, the Prairie provinces gained jurisdiction over their natural resources in the Natural Resources Transfer Act, 1930.

Conservation Efforts and Halfbreed Fishing in the Qu'Appelle Valley

Implementation of federal fishery regulation in the Qu'Appelle Lakes region began in 1884 with the appointment of Frederick Charles Gilchrist as the region's first Fisheries Overseer.[23] With explicit instruction from the federal Department of Marine and Fisheries, he was responsible for issuing licenses or permits; monitoring commercial and domestic fishing activity and enforcing fisheries regulation, particularly those related to fishing without a license; fishing during the closed season; and, stipulations related to the size of gill net mesh for certain kinds of fish. Soon after beginning his work, Gilchrist quickly began noting the frequency, intensity and challenges of Métis and First Nation fishing.[24] According to Gilchrist, First Nations and Métis in the Qu'Appelle district did "a great deal" of fishing both for domestic consumption and small-scale commercial sale. In 1885, he estimated Indigenous fishermen took over 150,000 pounds of fish from the

[20] North-West Territories. *Ordinances of the North-West Territories, Canada*. Regina: Government Printer, 1877 – 1984.
[21] The federal Government maintained jurisdiction over public lands and natural resources until 1930 with the passing of the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement which transferred jurisdiction to the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.
[22] Gulig, "We Beg the Government,".
[23] D. H. Bocking, "Gilchrist, Frederick Charles," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography,* accessed October 27, 2017. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gilchrist_frederick_charles_12E.html.
[24] For instance, in 1889, he noted the presence of about 20 Halfbreed and Indian families or 100 people fishing north of the Qu'Appelle Valley at Long Lake, with about 140 gill nets.

waters in the Qu'Appelle district. Half of this number, he estimated were whitefish, the remainder, pike and pickerel.

The Department of Indian Affairs purchased much of the local commercial catch, which they used as reserve rations. Regional settlers purchased the remainder for about six cents per pound.[25] Métis poverty and their continued reliance on the resource challenged legislated fish conservation measures. For Métis, fishing was one of few economic options available. For many, particularly older Métis fishing provided a significant means of feeding themselves and supporting their households.[26]

Concern for Intensity of Fishing and Risk of Overfishing

The intensity of Indigenous fishing in the region and the risk of overfishing the lakes was a consistent concern for Gilchrist because, despite their abundance, there was a large population dependent upon the fish resources of the Qu'Appelle Lakes. In his 1888 Annual Report, Gilchrist stressed that while "the fishery resources of these lakes are very great, it must not be forgotten that [the lakes] are small and have depending upon them for fresh fish an immense country."[27] Being that there were few other lakes in the region, he argued that it was necessary to strictly enforce fishing regulations.[28] A year later, he continued to call for urgent and immediate attention to the fish populations in all of the lakes within his region, including the Qu'Appelle Lakes.[29] That same year, in his annual reports to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries, he documented the gathering of Indigenous fishermen at the opening of the whitefish season in early November 1889, noting the presence of about 20 First Nations and Métis families or about 100 people

[25] Annual Report for Department of Marine and Fisheries for 1885, No. 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1886.
[26] W.A. Clark, Survey of Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle and File Hills Districts, 3 December 1886, Work for Half-Breeds in Qu'Appelle, Letter from Norbert Welsh 1886-1887, File No. 118650 RG 15, D-II-1, Vol. 447, Headquarters Correspondence, 1871-1946, Dominion Lands Branch, Department of the Interior, Library and Archives Canada.
[27] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1887, No. 6, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1888.
[28] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1887, No. 6, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1888.
[29] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1888, No. 8, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1889.

fishing with gill nets north of the Qu'Appelle Valley at Long Lake.[30] By 1892, he reported that Mission Lake in the Qu'Appelle Lakes chain was becoming overfished, but Katepwa Lake continued to have a sizable supply of tullibee, pike, pickerel, perch, and whitefish.[31] Mission Lake was being overfished because of intense fishing by First Nations and Métis from the File Hills Reserve.

The Métis Refuse: Inability to Collect Accurate Information on Catches

Gilchrist's inability to collect accurate statistics on the amount of fish caught in the Qu'Appelle Lakes exacerbated alarm of Indigenous overfishing. On multiple occasions, he reported to the Minister of Marine and Fisheries that it was consistently "almost impossible to procure correct returns from the fishing population of the Territories."[32] In particular, it was most difficult to ascertain catch numbers from the Métis, "owing to their reluctance to give it."[33] Métis fishermen, he noted, being illiterate, were "adverse to keeping or giving an account of their catch, making it very difficult to get at the correct figures."[34] Concern for overfishing of the Qu'Appelle Lakes brought about by the concentration of fishing activity, combined with Gilchrist's inability to collect accurate catch numbers, intensified conservation enforcement.

Collecting accurate fish catch statistics continued to be a challenge for state agents well into the 1910s. In 1912, E. W. Miller, Inspector of Fisheries for the Qu'Appelle region, expressed difficulty in assessing the Métis catch as "…the Halfbreed and Indians never keep any record of their catch" and when they offered their estimations, he noted that "their guess at it is not likely to be nearly so correct as an estimate by the Fishery Guardian."[35] Three years later, it remained a concern that there

[30] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1889, No. 17, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1890.
[31] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No. 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.
[32] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1886, No. 16, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1887.
[33] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No. 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.
[34] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1887, No. 6, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1888.
[35] Appendix No.9, Saskatchewan – Report on the Fisheries of the Province by Inspector E.W. Miller, Fort Qu'Appelle, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1912, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1913.

was no accurate way of arriving at the amount of fish taken each year, or the number of individuals engaged in fishing. As a solution, Chief Inspector G.S. Davidson proposed that First Nations and Métis fishermen receive free permits to fish for their own use, provided they complete a year end statement that accurately reflected their total catch. This, Davidson believed, would be a way to collect accurate statistics and would be a "step in the proper direction."[36]

Balancing the Need for Conservation Efforts and the Halfbreed Question

Throughout his tenure as Fisheries Overseer, Gilchrist regularly rationalized that Qu'Appelle Lakes fish resources needed protection not only because of increasing regional settlement but also because of First Nations and Métis' continued reliance on fish resources. In his reports to the Minister of Fisheries, Gilchrist lamented the need to enforce conservation and prevention measures in ways that would not cause the Métis undue hardship or put additional pressure on government to provide support to the Métis.[37] Consequently, state agents both high in the bureaucracy and on the ground, found themselves unsure of how to balance the need for fisheries protection with the needs of Indigenous peoples. Gilchrist reasoned, that fisheries could provide a solution to Métis poverty, not just in the Qu'Appelle Valley but in other areas across the North-West Territories. If well protected and restocked, fisheries, when necessary could provide "a never-failing supply of wholesome food for these people" whereby, the Métis could earn "a very fair livelihood" if they approached fishing "systematically and with intelligence."[38] In the interim, enforcing conservation measures might cause some hardship but Gilchrist cautioned, it was better that the fish be protected rather than risk

[36] Appendix No. 6. Saskatchewan and Alberta – Report on the Fisheries of the Provinces by Chief Inspector G.S. Davidson, Indian Head, Saskatchewan, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1915, No. 39, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1916.
[37] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No. 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.
[38] Appendix No. 12, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1894, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1894, No. 11A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1895.

depletion at which point, the Métis would be starved out of their communities and left with no other option but be forced to seek Government support.[39]

Throughout the late 1880s and into the 1890s, the question of how best to deal with Métis fishermen proved complex.[40] Often referred to as the "Halfbreed Question", what to do with the Métis across the North-West plagued Government officials. Accordingly, the Government perceived the Métis to be at a disadvantage because of their poverty. Unlike their First Nations relatives, they did not fall under Treaty, nor did they have the same level of supervision or oversight by the Indian agent, nor the degree of supports available. Once prosperous buffalo hunters, the Métis were in a precarious position without opportunity in a changing economy. For Fisheries agents the question remained – how to enforce the regulations in a way that did not cause the Métis additional hardship? If not enforced, State agents reasoned, "greater hardships will fall to the lot of these people, and the Government will have a large board bill to pay."[41] The question was further complicated by the differences in how fishing regulation applied to Métis and First Nations. Fishing regulation did not apply to First Nations in the same way it did to Métis, as First Nations had Treaty-protected fishing rights. Because of such differences, Government agents questioned, how could they force the Métis to purchase a license, observe fishery regulations and restrict them from fishing during the closed season while at the same time not enforcing the same on First Nations fishermen? Indeed, how could they expect the Métis to simply "stand aside and serenely watch the Indians doing what they are told not to do?"[42]

The Métis Have a Bad Way of Doing Things: Criticism of Métis Fishing Practices

Indigenous fishing practices combined with the character of the Métis, Gilchrist argued, prompted overfishing and did little to prevent their hardship. The Métis, he

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[39] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.
[40] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No. 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.; Appendix No. 12, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries,1894, No. 11A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1895.
[41] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.
[42] Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1892, No 10A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1893.

argued "had a bad way of doing things" as their practice of putting up their winter supply of fish during breeding season not only depleted fish stocks at a crucial time of year, but contributed to their poverty.[43] During the winter, he maintained, the Métis would not attempt fishing with nets because it was too labour intensive and so it was "doubtful whether they would be able to catch enough fish at that time of the year with which to keep themselves alive."[44] So destitute were the Métis, he contended, they would "often resort to rifles in small steams at the approach of spring, for the purpose of catching suckers for food, as they run up stream preparing for spawning."[45] He maintained that although the Métis often preserved enough fish to last the winter, their irresponsible and careless nature resulted in their fish stores being exhausted long before spring.

> Under the present system the natives put up in a short time in the fall what they consider ample supplies of fish; but unfortunately, they are as improvident as they are lazy, and in the course of a few weeks, what was considered plenty of fish to last till spring has entirely disappeared, and they have to fall back on the missionaries, Indian Department, or any one that will give to them food with which to keep themselves and their families alive.[46]

He encouraged practices that would decrease negligent action and any burden placed on fisheries agents and the state. If the Métis were to follow these practices, "the annual starving would not take place, the fisheries would not become depleted, and the natives would not be in their present state of lazy, improvident helplessness."[47] As a solution to ensuring an adequate food supply, he suggested the use of nets and lines at different times during the winter. Fishermen could use nets until the water became too cold for the fish

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[43] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.
[44] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.
[45] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.
[46] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.
[47] Appendix No. 10, North-West Territories – Annual Report for the Year 1893, on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, by Inspector F.C. Gilchrist, 1893, No 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1894.

to be active. When the weather changed and water became more moderate, fishermen could use angling lines in place of nets.

Fishing as a Last Resort

State agents believed fishing was economically a last resort and that the Métis would eventually abandon it for more permanent economic opportunities. Giving up their "aimless existence," Gilchrist reasoned, would enable the Métis "to gain a livelihood for themselves and some security for their children."[48] This would also alleviate some concern for overfishing. Gilchrist's successor as Overseer, E.W. Miller, anecdotally noted a clear connection between demand for labour brought about by the increase in settlement and a reduced reliance on Métis fishing. In his 1899 Report on the Qu'Appelle District, Miller observed that all of the local officers in the district reported a favourable condition of the fisheries in the North-West Territories and a "falling off in the amount of fishing done in the more settled districts owing principally to the great demand for labour in other branches of industry.[49] According to Miller, the number of Métis south of the Saskatchewan River dependent on fishing was decreasing because of economic activity in the more settled areas, and as a result, the most serious risk of fish stock exhaustion was fading.[50] In the following years, this trend continued in the Qu'Appelle Valley, but also in regions further afield.

Métis Responses to Increased Government Regulation: Risked Fishing Without Licenses

As Fisheries Overseer, Gilchrist and those who replaced him, regularly encountered First Nations and Métis attempting to make their living from fishing. When caught fishing illegally, it was because Métis fished without the required license, during the closed season or with nets of the wrong mesh size. Most often, it was because Métis could not afford to purchase the required $2.00 domestic license for fishing with a gill net

[48] Appendix No. 12, Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1894, No. 11A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1895.
[49] Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1899, No. 11A, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers,* 1900.
[50] Appendix No. 7, North-West Territories – Report on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories, for the Year 1899, by Inspector E.W. Miller, 1900, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1901.

or dip net, or the $25.00 commercial license for fishing with a seine. In 1887, the local newspaper printed a warning from the Fisheries Overseer who would be watching for people fishing for sale or barter without a license. Parties should also be careful to not have any fish in their possession during the closed season or they risked a fine or imprisonment.[51] Fishing without a license criminalized Métis harvesting activity and created the risk of a penalty most could not afford but it did little to deter Métis fishermen.

However, state agents rarely handed out financial penalty because they recognized the Métis' poverty.[52] Rather, Fisheries Overseer's seized fishermen's nets, confiscated catches or simply handed out reprimands and warnings. On one occasion, in late October 1888, Overseer Gilchrist spotted Clem Peltier on the south side of Katepwa Lake fishing out of season. When Gilchrist attempted to apprehend him, Peltier dropped his net and fled. The Overseer followed Peltier to his home, finding a large catch of fish. He forced Peltier to forfeit his license and nets, give up his catch and pay a $25.00 fine.[53] Two years later, Gilchrist again apprehended Peltier and confiscated his net for fishing during the closed season, but did not give him a fine.[54] The same year, Gilchrist seized at least 12 nets from other fishermen during the closed season, five of which he returned.[55] The flexibility in which Gilchrist applied fishing regulations suggests that in some instances, state agents were sensitive to practical reality over strict law enforcement.

In his formal correspondence to the Minister of Fisheries, Gilchrist generally applauded Métis and non-Indigenous fishermen for "well-observing" both the closed season and the net mesh size and noted significant gains in the adoption of smaller meshed nets by First Nations fishermen. In his daily journal, however, he provided a more detailed description of his everyday interactions with Indigenous fishermen such as

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[51] *Qu'Appelle Vidette,* April 21, 1877.
[52] In a review of Canada Sessional Papers Annual Reports from the Department of Marine and Fisheries from 1886 to 1900 there are only a handful on instances where Métis fisherman were apprehended and fined.
[53] Appendix No.7, Annual Report for the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1888, No. 8, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Canada Sessional Papers, 1889.; F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[54] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[55] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Baptiste Desjarlais, Simon Blondeau, Alex Fisher, Baptiste Robillard, Jules Cardinal, Francois Boucher, "Old Fayant" and others. He also detailed interactions with a number of Métis women, including Madeleine Klyne and her daughters Elise Klyne Kavanaugh, Madeleine Klyne Desjarlais and Marie Klyne Bellegarde when they came into conflict with the Fisheries Agent.[56] On one occasion, Gilchrist confiscated Bellegarde and Desjarlais' six nets for fishing out of season. It is unclear whether or not he returned Desjarlais' nets, but he did return Bellegarde's four nets.[57] She was married to Joseph Bellegarde from Little Black Bear reserve in the File Hills area. Despite being Métis, she gained Treaty Indian status under the Indian Act when she married and so benefitted from the Treaty right to fish out of season. Clear in Gilchrist's records is the frequency of daily interactions with Métis fisherman, both men and women. As is the determination of these women as they continued to fish despite the threat of having their nets or catch seized or the risk of or financial penalty.

Free Permits and Requests to Fish in the Closed Season

Recognizing the need for flexibility in the application of fishing legislation, in 1886, the Deputy Minister of Fisheries directed Gilchrist to allow the most destitute Métis to fish during the closed season but only with one gill net per family per day.[58] Gilchrist was "to do the best [he] can in the interest of fisheries," issuing free permits to Métis fishermen he deemed most needy.[59] Wasting no time in taking action, Gilchrist immediately issued permits to five Métis fisherman and gave assurances that the most needy might "set their nets once in a while" during the closed season despite contravention of the legislation.[60] He issued free permits to two widowed Métis women who had no means of support, or means of paying for a license. He also issued a free

[56] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[57] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Marie Klyne was married to Joseph Bellegarde, a status Indian from Little Black Bear. Upon their marriage, she acquired Treaty Indian status under the Indian Act.
[58] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[59] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[60] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

permit to an old woman responsible for the care of her blind adult son.[61] The Fisheries Overseer was responsible for enforcing fisheries regulation but he was unmistakably also sympathetic to Métis hardship. In another instance, Gilchrist caught a woman fishing illegally but because of her poor circumstances he allowed her to keep her nets and continue fishing.[62] After Gilchrist picked up her net at Klyne's point on Katepwa Lake, the woman followed him down the lakeshore, catching up to him at Thomas and Elise Klyne Kavanaugh's where he was confiscating two of Mrs. Kavanaugh's nets. The woman pleaded with him that she was very poor and had two children who would have no breakfast in the morning. She had no horses or cows, and was a widow from the 1885 Resistance. [63] Hearing the woman's misfortune, Gilchrist returned her net and told her that she might set it "once in a while."[64] He also gave her all the bacon he had. Similarly, Gilchrist was kind toward a fisherman referred to as "Old Fayant" whose nets he had seized for fishing illegally. Learning of the man's misfortune and his wife's poor state of health, Gilchrist hoped to avoid creating additional hardship for the family so gave Fayant only a warning and returned his nets.[65]

As a state agent, Gilchrist attempted to balance conservation regulation with the needs of local Métis. He acted benevolently towards Métis fishermen, rarely reporting or fining them and returning their nets so that they could continue to support themselves. His efforts, were not unlike J.Z. Larocque's actions towards the Métis in the 1930s, where he also acted with compassion toward Métis hunters and trappers who had few options but to contravene game regulations to feed their families.

Throughout Gilchrist's tenure, many continued to request his permission to fish during the closed season, and when necessary petitioned Gilchrist's supervisors pursuing

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[61] Appendix No. 10, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1893, No. 11, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Canada Sessional Papers, 1894.; F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[62] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[63] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[64] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. The identity of the woman is unknown but it is very likely that she was a relative of the Klyne family.
[65] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

such concessions. In 1888, Simon Blondeau unsuccessfully petitioned the Department of Fisheries requesting that they allow the Métis to each fish one net during the closed season.[66] This type of political advocacy and the petitioning for rights to subsistence activity was not a new strategy for Qu'Appelle Métis as they had unsuccessfully petitioned the Federal Government throughout the 1870s and early 1880s. However, Blondeau's petitioning of a distant government rather than working to have needs met by local Government enforcement agents suggests a disconnect between local and Federal Government authority and that the Métis wanted assurances of their continued access to fish resources.

Recognizing the reliance on fish resources by Métis not only in the Qu'Appelle Valley but across the North-West, the Legislative Assembly of the Territories adopted a resolution on September 14, 1893 to address the issue. The resolution advocated for changes to Fisheries regulations in the North-West allowing Métis fishermen permits to fish for their own sustenance, to fish for whitefish during the closed season and to fish for sturgeon in the Saskatchewan and Battle Rivers.[67] When referred to the federal Minister of Marine and Fisheries, The Privy Council maintained that the $2.00 domestic licenses must remain a requirement for all fishermen and that regulation enforcement continue, especially when fish were spawning during the closed season.[68] However, due to the request made by the Legislative Assembly, they agreed to issue free licenses to those settlers and residents who relied upon fish resources, and to permit fishing during the closed season only at the discretion of the local Fishery Overseer. This included cases where the Overseer was satisfied that a genuine need existed and that individuals were fishing for domestic consumption and not for barter, trade or export. If fishermen breached these provisions, the Overseer was to cancel licenses and impose financial penalties.

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[66] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[67] Resolution September 14, 1893. *Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the North-West Territories.* (Regina: J.A. Reid, Government Printer, 1893) 83-84.
[68] John Mcgee, Clerk Privy Council to Lieutentant Governor, Certified Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honourable Privy Council, Approved by his Excellency the Governor General in Council, on the 28th October 1893. Fisheries Regulation. Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Receiving notification of the changes, Gilchrist worked quickly to acquaint the Métis with the Government's intention to issue free permits, bringing them together for a public meeting. Gilchrist invited Métis men of the settlement to meet at the Lebret Mission, with the Priest as an interpreter. He shared his plan to grant permits to a few of the neediest fishermen and then wait to grant permission to the rest until he was satisfied that most of the fish in the Qu'Appelle Lakes had finished spawning. Not pleased with Gilchrist's proposal, the Métis replied that they could not wait to put up their winter catch and would likely starve because only ten to twelve families had any potatoes stored for the winter.[69] Similarly, after hearing that fishing was going to be free again, many Valley Métis had returned from far away lakes without having put up their winter catch. They asked that Gilchrist grant permits according to their needs and to fish throughout the entire closed season. As a conservation measure, they offered to "watch one another and see that no one used small meshed nets or put up more fish than he would actually require for the use of himself and family."[70] Gilchrist refused their suggestion, believing they would "fish just as they pleased."[71] He remained adamant that free permits meant the Métis "must act squarely" or be refused any privileges.[72] The Métis agreed to Gilchrist's plan, whereupon he informed them that these concessions were only granted for the current year and that in the next year, the regulations would be enforced.[73] This meeting was not the first time that the Priest facilitated interactions between the Métis and the Fisheries Overseer. He often acted as translator and interpreter between the predominately French and Michif speaking Métis and the English-speaking Overseer, communicating details regarding fishing regulations, the opening and closing of fishing

[69] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[70] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[71] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[72] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[73] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

seasons and advocating to the Overseer on the Métis' behalf when caught fishing illegally.[74]

Fishing Without "Free Licenses"

The Métis may have agreed to Gilchrist's plan for dispensing free licenses but it did little to stop those without licenses from fishing. In the days immediately following his October 1894 public meeting, Gilchrist travelled throughout the area visiting many Métis' homes. The purpose of these visits was to assess their existing need, and to monitor and police their fishing activities. In general, he found the Métis to be "a miserable outfit but not in such bad shape as [he] was led to believe."[75] The Métis were obviously poor but he found many to have at least a few cattle, horses, or pigs.[76] Some, he noted, abided by the provisions outlined at the meeting, while others simply refused to wait, disregarding his directive and fishing without a permit or the Overseer's permission. Gilchrist recalled one instance, whereupon learning of an old woman who fished to support her family, he travelled to her home intent on granting her a free permit. When he reached her home, he found that she had not waited for his approval but had closed up her house and set off with her two daughters across Katepwa Lake to fish.[77] Likewise, just days after being given the warning that permits were to be granted for personal use only, Gilchrist became aware that some of the Métis he had allowed to fish were selling or trading their catch locally.[78] Confronting one of the fishermen, Gilchrist warned that the permits were granted for personal use only and the fisherman must not provide fish to anyone other than his family or he would have to forfeit his permit. He also informed the Métis and the Mission Priest that if the Métis accepted fish from others, they would not be eligible for a free permit.[79] And, once the season started, he would not allow nets with

[74] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[75] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[76] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[77] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[78] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[79] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

meshes of less than 5 inches extension or of more than 300 yards in length.[80] Undeniably, fishing permits for the Métis may have been free, but they were not without restriction.

Free Licenses – Not Free of Caveats

As the Overseer made his rounds throughout the Valley region, he used these visits as an opportunity to examine the Métis' catches. In general, he found many of the whitefish had not yet finished their spawning and again questioned the Métis' character and their knowledge of fish spawning. Inspecting a catch of whitefish, pike and tullibee, the Overseer reasoned that it was evident that the Métis "did not know what they were talking about when they were discussing the spawning time of the whitefish, or else they were trying to deceive me. Whichever, it was not creditable to them, especially after the repeated warnings from me against their falsifying things."[81] Inspecting fish from many different catches, they found the whitefish in various stages of spawning and so determined that the fishing could potentially start as early as October 26th.[82] Word quickly spread and on the 26th, without official word of the start of the season, the Métis began setting their nets. A few days later, Gilchrist apprehended three fishermen who had almost 800 whitefish in their possession. Subsequently, Jules Cardinal and Francois Boucher came forward to state that they too had been fishing without a permit, catching about 250 fish each.[83] They fished because they desperately needed to feed their families and because they had heard that the season was open. Gilchrist responded by giving them "a good talking to" and clarifying that the season had indeed not yet started and so not only were they breaking the law but they were, "injuring their own and their neighbor's chances of getting favors from the Department."[84] Pleased that they had come forward, Gilchrist agreed to overlook their actions and continued to issue free permits to the poorest families, with an added caveat that they only fish within one mile of their house

[80] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[81] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[82] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[83] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[84] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

on the main shore.[85] These examples demonstrate that Gilchrist had flexibility in not only how he distributed licenses but also in how he enforced regulation.

Saskatchewan Game and Fishery Policy after 1905

By 1905, Fisheries officials in the new province of Saskatchewan were beginning to see the impact of increased fishing by settlers on fish stocks. Only a few years later, Federal Fisheries Inspector for the provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, E. W. Miller, noted that they reached the maximum number of licenses safely issued without fear of depleting fish stocks.[86] These provincial numbers did not include Qu'Appelle Métis, and other Métis across the province who fished without the required license. Indeed, fishing had been quite good, even well above average in recent years, particularly in the Qu'Appelle region.[87] The pressure on provincial fisheries caused by licensed fishing, combined with First Nations and Métis fishing activities, attracted the attention of the Federal Department which, in response, implemented a Dominion of Alberta and Saskatchewan Fisheries Commission in 1910-11. The Commission was to report on the conditions and requirements of the fisheries and make recommendation for improvement. In their findings was the continued question of how best to deal with Indigenous peoples' reliance on fishing. The Commission made a special recommendation regarding the current licensing system in both Alberta and Saskatchewan. They suggested that First Nations and Métis, who they considered one and the same, be granted one free permit per family to fish with no more than 60 yards of net.[88] These permits allowed holders to fish during the closed season, provided they fished for their own daily consumption and not to

[85] F. C. Gilchrist, "Diary of a Homesteader and Fisheries Inspector, 1883-1896," Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[86] Appendix No. 9, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries by Inspector E.W. Miller, for the Year Ending March 30, 1908, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1909.
[87] Appendix No. 9, North-West Territories – Annual Report on the North-West Territories for 1902, by Inspector E.W. Miller, 1902, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1904.; Appendix No. 9, Canada, North-West Territories – Report on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories by Inspector E.W. Miller of Qu'Appelle and Harrison Young of Edmonton, 1903, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Canada Sessional Papers, 1905.;Appendix No. 9, Canada, North-West Territories – Report on the Fisheries of the North-West Territories by Inspector E.W. Miller of Qu'Appelle and Harrison Young of Edmonton, 1904, No.22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, Canada Sessional Papers, 1906.
[88] Canada, *Dominion Alberta and Saskatchewan Fisheries Commission, 1910-1911, Report and Recommendations with Appendices* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1912) 22.

preserve for the future.[89] The recommendation came at the request of Indigenous fishermen from northern Saskatchewan and Alberta who stressed their desire to take all the fish they required during the whitefish spawning period, not only to meet their daily need but also for their winter consumption.[90]

The following year, the Fisheries Department began implementing some of the Commission's recommendations including those that increased protection for lakes in the more settled parts of the province; shortened the fishing season on lakes fished for whitefish; and, restricted use of nets in smaller lakes to domestic use only.[91] Selective in what it acted on, the Department took no immediate action to provide free permits to Indigenous fishermen.[92] A year later, it issued free permits to First Nations and Métis fishermen, provided fishermen complete a form accurately detailing their catch at the end of the year.[93] Consequently, the "Halfbreed Question" of what to do with the Métis remained unanswered at the same time fisheries conservation and preservation efforts increased. After 1905, and increasing after the Commission made its recommendations in 1911, Métis fishermen faced intensified regulation and enforcement efforts and intrusion into their livelihoods. Interactions with Government agents were shaped by paternalist attitudes about whether Métis were poor enough to require free fishing licenses.

Throughout the remainder of the 1910s and most of the 1920s, the Government continued issuing free fishing permits to Métis they deemed most destitute.[94] Decisions on whether or not to issue permits was inconsistent and Métis continued to advocate for their own interests. They also continued to fish despite regulation. They found ways to challenge the rule of law, resist increased intrusion into their livelihoods and continued to

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[89] Canada, *Fisheries Commission,* 22.
[90] Canada, *Fisheries Commission*, 29.
[91] Appendix No. 9. Saskatchewan and Alberta – Report on the Fisheries of the Provinces, by Chief Inspector E. W. Miller, Fort Qu'Appelle, 1912, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, No. 22, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1914.
[92] Appendix No. 7. Saskatchewan and Alberta – Report on the Fisheries of the Provinces, by Chief Inspector E. W. Miller, Fort Qu'Appelle, 1913, Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, No. 39, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1915.
[93] Appendix No. 6. Annual Report of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, 1915, No. 39, Department of Marine and Fisheries, *Canada Sessional Papers*, 1916.
[94] For instance, Métis at Lac Pelletier in southern Saskatchewan were given free fishing permits from at least 1924 to 1929. See: G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch to John Barnett, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, 8 October 1930, Fisheries NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

harvest despite the risks or consequences. Métis adapted their fishing practices, were covert in their activities to avoid detection and even actively monitored game guardians' activities. Consequently, Métis continued to fish because it was what they knew, but also because they had little other option in feeding their families.

Advocating for Free Permits and Amendments to Fishing Regulations: Local Relief and Collective Métis Political Activism

In 1930, the Canadian Government transferred responsibility for natural resources to the provinces under the Natural Resources Transfer Agreement. Now for the first time, it was up to the province of Saskatchewan to regulate fisheries within their boundaries. The provincial Department of Natural Resources was created and a new Minister, inexperienced in dealing with the complex regulation and conservation of fisheries, was appointed.

By this time, the local Government in the Qu'Appelle Valley was feeling the strain of Métis poverty, with municipal budgets increasingly stretched to support relief. In late October 1930, the Fort Qu'Appelle Village Council and the Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 worked in tandem advocating for amendments to fishery regulations as a means of providing Métis relief. Indeed, free fishing permits would allow Métis families to sustain themselves, reducing the amount of relief they required. Both Councils separately requested that the provincial Deputy Minister of the Department of Natural Resources, John Barnett, extend the fishing season and increase the number of free licenses granted to reduce "distress becoming existent" in the district. They also requested that the Department reduce the allowed net length per individual from 600 yards to 300 yards and that only those who have resided within the immediate area for at least three months receive licenses.[95] The number of Métis living within the municipality had increased with the free licensing, as many moved from far distances toward the lakes. According to the Municipal Council, the Métis numbered close to 200 in the

[95] Village of Fort Qu'Appelle to Minister of Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources, 23 October 1930, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.; Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 to Minister of Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources, 6 November 1930, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Municipality, and were, for the most part indigent, unemployed, relying on relief and subsisting mostly on fish.[96] This undoubtedly created an extra financial burden for the Village and the Municipality.[97] The yardages requested, as the Department pointed out, were the maximum for commercial licenses, not the domestic license which the Municipality sought and so no changes were necessary. Additionally, the Department took a conservationist position on the residency restriction request. G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries for the province advised the Deputy Minister noting that,

> a point that must be kept in mind is that the fisheries are a public interest and are not for the special benefit of any one community in particular. A resident living say 50 or 100 miles from a lake should have as good a right to receive the equal benefit as a resident who happens to live in closer proximity to the lake. I would therefore suggest that no changes be made in the yardage of net and that no restriction be placed on the distance the settlers might live from the lakes in order to obtain a license.[98]

The Department of Fisheries response was clear. There would be no changes to the regulation.[99]

Two months later, the Village Council of Fort Qu'Appelle requested a two-week extension to the winter fishing season. Undeterred, the Council argued that fishing alleviated the burden of relief for the village and that extending the winter fishing season until the end of February would potentially eliminate the need for providing relief. They rationalized that the season extension would not deplete the fish stocks.[100] After

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[96] N.E. Rose, Secretary Treasurer, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 to John Barnett, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 5 May 1931, NR.13 Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. At this time, the Municipality estimated that there were at least 35 to 40 Métis families or 200 individuals living within their boundaries.

[97] N.E. Rose, Secretary Treasurer, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 to John Barnett, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 5 May 1931, NR.13 Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[98] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to John Barnett, Deputy Minister Natural Resources, Department of Natural Resources, 28 October 1930, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[99] John Barnett, Deputy Minister Natural Resources to N.E. Rose, Secretary Treasurer, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, 20 November 1930, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[100] M.A. Harrison, Secretary Treasurer, Village of Fort Qu'Appelle to John Barnett, Deputy Minister Natural Resources, 26 January 1931, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

consulting the Supervisor of Fisheries, G.C. MacDonald about the current size of fish stocks in the Qu'Appelle Lakes, the Deputy Minister agreed to the extension.[101]

The Municipal Council passed another motion in late spring requesting a two-week extension to the season. [102] An extra two-weeks, they argued, would be enough time for unemployed Métis to secure food for their families and alleviate financial pressure on the Municipality. Forwarding their request to the Deputy Minister's office, the Council also requested consideration for the reinstatement of the free fishing permits and that the Métis not be "unduly penalized" by having to pay the two-dollar domestic license fee.[103] Three weeks later, the Department responded, stating that there would be no further free permits nor permission to fish during the closed season. Upholding fishing regulations would protect the fisheries and ultimately benefit Métis who relied on fish resources.[104] By this time, however, the season had already closed so the decision was of little consequence.

Unhappy with the Department's response, Métis fishermen employed a familiar political strategy and acted. Petitioning the Government as they had in the late nineteenth century, Métis heads of families collectively advocated for their rights to maintain their subsistence livelihood. Baptiste Robillard and 46 others lobbied for free permits to fish for their own use, arguing that they were out of work, destitute, and required this relief to avoid starvation.[105] Not coincidently, many of the signatories to this petition were children of those who had advocated for land, hunting and fishing rights in previous petitions of the 1870s-80s. Raised listening to the oral histories and stories of their

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[101] John Barnett, Deputy Minister Natural Resources to M.A. Harrison, Secretary Treasurer, Village of Fort Qu'Appelle, 13 February 1931, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[102] Municipal Council Minutes, 4 May 193. Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, Council Minutes, R2.739, Relief Records 1921-1955, Provincial Archive of Saskatchewan.
[103] N.E. Rose Secretary Treasurer, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 to John Barnett, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 5 May 1931, NR.13 Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[104] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to N.E. Rose, Secretary Treasurer, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, NR.13 Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[105] Baptiste Robillard and 46 others, Petition, 28 May 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, these signatories would have recognized petitions as a legitimate avenue through which to advocate on their own behalf and have their voices heard. The timing of this petition corresponded to the increased politicization of Métis across Saskatchewan, who began organizing in the late 1920s, forming the Halfbreeds of Saskatchewan, later renamed the Saskatchewan Métis Society.[106] By the early 1930s, a handful of Métis from southern Saskatchewan organized around Métis land rights, education and relief.[107] Métis political organization, historian Murray Dobbin argues, was necessary to not only provide a voice for the Métis, but to "pressure the government to improve the conditions of the Métis – to help them get jobs, relief and education for their children, and to press their land claims.[108] The political efforts of Métis fishermen in petitioning Government served as a precursor to more formalized political organization of the Métis Society. A noted and significant departure from earlier Métis petitions was the inclusion of 23 women signatories.[109] Thirteen of these women signed alongside their husbands, while ten signed independently suggesting that these were single or widowed women. The presence of women as fishermen was not only indicative of the significance of fishing to the maintenance of female-headed households

[106] On the political organization of the Saskatchewan Métis Society see: Murray Dobbin, "Métis Struggles of the Twentieth Century: The Saskatchewan Métis Society – 1935-1980. Part One: Early Beginnings," *New Breed Magazine*, August 1978, 16-19.; Murray Dobbin, "Métis Struggles of the Twentieth Century: The Saskatchewan Métis Society – 1935-1980. Part Two: The Land Issues: Whitemen's Advice and Government Deceit," *New Breed Magazine*, September 1978,10-13.; Barron, *Moccasins*.; Schilling, *Gabriel's Children*.

[107] Thomas Major, interview by Murray Dobbin, 14 March 1978, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Cultur, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca ; Joe Amyotte, interview by Murray Dobbin, 11 August 1977, Virtual Museum of Métis History and Cultur, Gabriel Dumont Institute, www.metismuseum.ca

[108] Murray Dobbin, "Part One: Early Beginnings" 17.

[109] Baptiste Robillard and 46 others, Petition, 28 May 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Petition signatories included: Baptiste Robillard, Alex Desjarlais, Mrs. Alex Desjarlais, Isadore Blondeau, Mrs. Isadore Blondeau, Thomas St. Denis, Mrs. Clement Brabant (Philomena), John Larocque, Mrs. John Larocque, W.J. Fisher, Mrs. W.J. Fisher, Jean Baptiste Larocque, Mrs. M.L. Larcoque, Joseph Amyotte, Mrs. Joseph Amyotte, Mr. Jack Blondeau, Mrs. Chris Robillard (Francoise Blondeau), Mrs. Gaspard Jeannotte (nee Blondeau), Mrs. Solomon Parisien (Melanie Liza Majore), Mrs. Jennie Parisien, John Kelly, Leo Parisien, Mrs. Leo Parisien, Ray Fisher, Maurice Parisien, Mrs. Gregoire Poitras (Celina Parisien), Gregoire Poitras, Thomas Poitras, Alex Brabant, William Kelly, Joseph Peltier, Mike Desjarlais, Mrs. Mike Desjarlais, Mrs. Tobie Brabant (Marie Fisher), Simon Desjarlais, Mrs. E. Shanite, Mrs. Baptiste Robillard, Charles Peltier, Joe Peltier, Mrs. Joe Peltier, Albert Klyne, Mrs. A Klyne, John Charette, Mrs. J. Charette, Mrs. Louis Sinclair, Louis Sinclair, Mrs. Margaret Charette, Leo St. Dennis.

and women's roles in their families, but also reflective of Métis women's burgeoning political activism through the newly formed provincial Métis organizations.[110]

Unlike the previous unanswered petitions, the provincial Government took some action on the Métis' request, directing the Fishery Inspector to contact the signatories and create a list of only those most destitute and elderly should they decide to issue free permits. The Deputy Minister warned the Inspector to be very careful of the names he submitted and to "bear in mind only those who are unable to work or who are too advanced in age, should be considered as eligible…. There may also be others who need this, whose names are not mentioned on the list."[111] Not all Métis were to receive free permits, only those the Fishery Inspector determined most indigent.

Four months after the Métis submitted their petition to the Government, the Municipality again reached out to the Department of Natural Resources, reiterating their position. In September 1931, they asked that the Métis receive free permits due to the sizable population in the region that relied on fishing, compounded by the Municipality's inability to provide direct or indirect relief in the form of employment. Additionally, the Municipality argued that as it was the Department's objective to promote angling in the summer months for visitors and tourists, they should also consider the extraordinary situation that the Métis find themselves in. Restricting their fishing to the open season and requiring that they purchase a domestic license would inflict undue hardship on an already poor population that had few options.[112]

In the days immediately following the Municipality's request, the Métis again petitioned for a restoration of the free permits, arguing that they had little means of supporting themselves and that without the means to fish they would have to apply to the Municipality or the provincial Relief Commission for support.[113] Sixty-eight heads of

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[110] Troupe, "Métis Women."
[111] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to P.S. Pettit, Fishery Inspector, Fort Qu'Appelle, 12 June 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[112] G.M. Bushell, Reeve, Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 to Supervisor of Fisheries, 4 September 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[113] Lebret Métis to J.T.M. Anderson, Minister of Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch, Petition, 19 September 1931, NR1 -1 F300 RRNR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan. Petition signatories

families, representing 277 individuals, signed the petition. The Council formally endorsed the Métis position before forwarding their petition, along with a copy of the Municipal Council's resolution to the Minister of Natural Resources.[114] This petition represented a greater number of individuals than the earlier 28 May 1931 petition, and included 49 additional signatories not included on the previous petition. It also included the signatures of eight women, all identified as widows.

The reply from the new and inexperienced provincial Minister's Office was not positive. The Department of Natural Resources argued that as a provincial agency, they could do nothing to alter the federal fishing regulations and that there had been no direction from the Federal Department of Marine and Fisheries to provide Métis with free permits. As a solution, they suggested that the Municipality or the provincial Relief Commission cover the costs of providing Métis with the $2.00 domestic license so that they could continue to fish in a "legal manner."[115] The provincial Minister held firm in his opinion. The Métis would not be provided free fishing permits, rather they were to be treated as other settlers and made to purchase a domestic license.[116] After this final decision, the Municipality took no further action until two years later, when it engaged in a different strategy. This time, the Municipality advocated to have the lakes restocked with whitefish, the Métis' principal food.[117] No sooner had the Municipality submitted its

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included: William Fisher, J. Morin, Alex St. Dennis, Fred Klyne, Clyne Wright, Frank Morin, Joe Morin, Mike Desmarias, George Racette, Leo Brabant, Ray Fisher, Albert Dazé, Moise Dazé, Peter Blondeau, William J. Kelly, Thomas Desjarlais, J. B. Larocque, Isadore Blondeau, M. Blondeau, Bruno Klyne, J. B. Poitras, Rene Page St., W. J. Fisher, Henri Parisien, Mrs. T. Brabant, J. B. Parisien, John Parisien, Alex Brabant, Simon Desjarlais, J. B. Blondeau, Joe Delorme, Joe Desjarlais, Stanley Desjarlais, Isadore Desjarlais, G. Jannott, Alfred Major, Edmond Major, William Desjarlais, Adolphe Pelletier, Mrs. Margrette Charette, Mr. Allan Larocque, Walter Harper, J. B. Robillard, John Larocque, Alex Desjarlais, Zachary Poitras, Corbett St. Denis, Joe Adrian St. Dennis, Joe Pelletier, Louis St. Clair, John Kelly, Mrs. Soloman Parisien, Mrs. Justine Page, Mrs. Jennie Parisien, Johnny Blondeau, Mrs. C. Robillard, Zachary Blondeau, Mike Beaulieau, Gregory Poitras, Paul Bruno, Joe. Z. Larocque, Mrs. Adeline Delorme, Mrs. C. Brabant, Geo Poitras, Geo Amyotte, F. X, Welsh, Joe Welsh.

[114] N.E Rose, Secretary, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle, No. 187 to J.T.M. Anderson, Minister, Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch, 19 October 1931, NR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[115] Department of Natural Resources to N. E. Rose, Secretary-Treasurer, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, 26 October 1931, NR.1/1 Department of Natural Resources, F-300-RR Fisheries: Rules and Regulations, 1930-31, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[116] G.C. Macdonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to Louis Sangret, Turtleford, 10 November 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[117] Municipal Council Minutes, 2 October 1933, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, Council Minutes R2.739, Relief Records 1921-1955, Provincial Archive of Saskatchewan.

request to the province when another Métis petition arrived requesting free permits and a Municipal endorsement on their behalf to the provincial Department of Natural Resources.[118] Neither the Métis nor the Municipality were ready to give up.

Other Métis across Saskatchewan also employed similar advocacy strategies. Individuals from Duck Lake, St. Laurent, Saskatoon, Turtleford, Debden, Fairholme and Cochin also sent letters requesting free permits.[119] Similar to Qu'Appelle Métis, families at Cochin took collective action and submitted a petition signed by 34 individuals.[120] Each time the Department's responded consistently – free permits would only be issued to Treaty Indians and not Métis. It remained necessary for Métis fishermen to purchase a $2.00 domestic fishing license. G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries, reiterated that the provincial Department had no authority over the matter of free licenses. If Métis at Cochin received free licenses, then all settlers across the province would have to receive the same privilege. Further, he cautioned, if Métis received permission to fish during the closed season it would increase the risk of depleting fish resources. According to MacDonald,

> there are no provisions in the Dominion Fishery regulations giving this Department authority to issue free fishing license to other than resident Indians. If your request was granted all the settlers in the province would be equally entitled to the same privileges as the regulations do not make any distinction between the Half-breed and the white settler….I am sure you will realize the effect it would have on your lake if unlimited netting of fish were allowed during the closed season. This Department is charged with the responsibility of protecting the fish in the various lakes for the benefits of the settlers living in the district and does not intend to grant any special privilege to a locality. In order to avoid the

[118] Municipal Council Minutes, 7 October 1933, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, Council Minutes R2.739, Relief Records 1921-1955, Provincial Archive of Saskatchewan.
[119] Baptiste Parenteau, Duck Lake to Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, 4 June 1931; W.J. Tait, Saskatoon to Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, 13 June 1931; J.B. Ouellette, St. Laurent to Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, 23 June 1931; Louis Sangret, Turtleford, 4 November 1931; J.B. Arcand, Debden to Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, 18 November 1931; Aime Thibeault, Fairholme to Supervisor of Fisheries, Department of Natural Resources, 15 December 1931; M. Martell, Halfbreeds at Cochin to John Barnett, Deputy Minister, 1 November 1931, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[120] M. Martell and Halfbreeds at Cochin to John Barnett, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, Petition, 1 November 1932, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

> depletion of the lake of fish life in any area, such a request therefore cannot be granted.[121]

And so, in the 1930s province-wide Métis political advocacy to maintain their livelihoods failed.

The Village of Fort Qu'Appelle and the Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187 were not the only local bodies feeling the financial burden of Métis relief. In 1933-1934, both the Municipality of Last Mountain Lake and the Municipality of Grayson, in the Qu'Appelle Valley at Crooked Lake, made requests to the Department of Natural Resources for free permits to Métis within their boundaries. [122] Yet again the province remained adamant that it was beyond the scope of their Department to make amendments to the Dominion fishing regulations. Changes to federal regulation not only required an Order-in-Council, but any changes made would apply to the entire province and not just to selected areas. The Minister refused to make this request.[123]

In the years that followed, the provincial Department of Natural Resources and the Saskatchewan Relief Commission worked out an administrative arrangement whereby the Relief Commission would, in some areas, cover costs of domestic fishing permits to Métis receiving direct relief. Working with the provincial Relief Commission, the new provincial agency responsible for fishing regulation demonstrated its growth and experience in how to respond to the very real and complex issues Métis fishing, and their poverty, presented. This was good news to the Municipality of Qu'Appelle who had continued to pressure the provincial Government to relieve their financial burden of

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[121] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to M. Martell, Cochin, 8 November 1932, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[122] M. Hocking Secretary Treasurer, Rural Municipality of Last Mountain Lake, No. 250 to Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, 18 December 1933.; S. MacDonald, Secretary Treasurer, Rural Municipality of Grayson No. 184 to W.W. Amos, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, 9 November 1934, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[123] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to M. Hocking, Secretary Treasurer, Rural Municipality of Last Mountain Lake, No. 250, 4 January 1934.; W.W. Amos, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources to S. MacDonald, Secretary Treasurer, Rural Municipality of Grayson No. 184, 14 November 1934, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Métis relief.[124] It was also welcome news to the Lebret Union of the Unemployed who, under the leadership of their President, Thomas Majore and Secretary, Ray Fisher also pressured the Department to provide free permits.[125] The Union of the Unemployed was a political lobby group formed to advocate for employment and relief during the 1930s. The organization had a loose affiliation with the Communist Party, of which both Majore and Fisher were members.[126] Both Métis, they joined the Union of the Unemployed in 1936 with the hope of advancing Métis interests through the organization. [127] They were also founders of, and active in the Saskatchewan Métis Society during this time.

In winter 1939, Department Officials issued 106 free permits to Métis throughout the Qu'Appelle Valley in areas such as Lebret, Fort Qu'Appelle, Marieval, Indian Head and Sintaluta.[128] Of those issued, 86 were in the immediate area surrounding the Qu'Appelle Lakes. According to G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries, the caveat on these permits was that they were to be issued to "destitute half-breeds" on direct relief who could not afford to pay the required fee.[129] In addition, they were not to be issued to those on some other form of financial assistance such as Old Age Pension.[130] In 1942, the provincial field officers W.A. Brownlee and J.Z. Larocque issued at least 36 free permits to Métis in the Qu'Appelle Valley, billed to the Relief Commission.[131] These permits did

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[124] Municipal Council Minutes, 4 November and 7 November 1935, Rural Municipality of North Qu'Appelle No. 187, Council Minutes R2.739, Relief Records 1921-1955, Provincial Archive of Saskatchewan.
[125] Thomas Major and Ray Fisher, Union of the Unemployed to Department of Natural Resources, 16 March 1939, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.]
[126] Thomas Major, interview, 14 March 1978.
[127] Thomas Major, interview, 14 March 1978.
[128] G. C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to J.R. Hill, Deputy Minister, Department of Natural Resources, 5 May 1939, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[129] G.C. MacDonald, Supervisor of Fisheries to V. E. Lefebvre, Field Officer, Whitewood, 8 June 1939, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[130] O. Bright, Supervisor of Fisheries to J.Z. Larocque, Field Officer, 12 December 1942.; O. Bright, Supervisor of Fisheries to A.L. Spencer, Acting Superintendent, Fish hatchery, Fort Qu'Appelle, 15 December 1942, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.
[131] O. Bright, Supervisor of Fisheries to J.E. Tanner, Chief Accountant, 4 March 1932.; O. Bright, Supervisor of Fisheries to J. E. Tanner, Chief Accountant, 8 April 1942.; J.Z. Larocque, Field Officer to O. Bright, Supervisor of Fisheries, 17 December 1942, NR. 13. Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries

not provide complete freedom to fish in the Qu'Appelle Lakes, rather individual permits were specific to either Katepwa, Mission or Echo Lake. This was undoubtedly done as a conservation measure to protect from overfishing and depletion of fish resources on any specific lake. Of these permits granted, only four were to women. Many of the provided permits went to those who had signed the 1931 Qu'Appelle petitions.

Covert and Individual Métis Responses

In addition to collectively petitioning local, provincial and federal Governments for changes to fishing regulations, Métis fishermen and their families also worked in individual and covert ways to continue subsistence activity outside the watchful eye of state agents. Métis employed numerous strategies including modifying fishing and food preparation practices, taking notice of the game guardian's regular patrols and spreading word of his movement to other members of the community. In addition, if fishing in the closed season or without a license, Métis fishermen often adapted their practices and began fishing at night to avoid detection by the fisheries agent.[132] They also worked together in small groups, setting the nets and bringing in the catch so that work happened quickly. Working with others, rather than alone also allowed the use of more nets and resulted in larger catches. This ensured that families were able to continue sharing the proceeds of their labour and reduce their risk.[133] Fishing regulation did not stop the Métis from fishing or from the cultural practice of sharing food across families, but it led them to adapt their practice to avoid detection.

Conclusion

Conservation measures in Western Canada developed slowly after Confederation. Initial ideas about conservation focused on exerting control over Indigenous economies. As the new Dominion Government began implementing fish conservation regulation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, intervention into Métis livelihoods increased, challenging and criminalizing their subsistence activities. With the creation of

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Branch. 7. Licenses, Free to Halfbreeds and Destitute Settlers and closed season fishing, 1931-1942, Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

[132] Lawrence Welsh, interview, 2004.; Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.

[133] Margaret Harrison, interview, 9 July 2014.

the province in 1905 and the subsequent Fisheries Commission, regulation of Métis fishing intensified. Conservation policy, as it was applied to the Métis, was largely paternalistic and concerned with the intensity of Indigenous fishing and the potential this raised for overfishing and the depletion of fish stocks. In 1930, responsibility for natural resources was transfered to the provincial Government and there was increased intervention by the province into Métis livelihoods. In response, the provincial Government become the focus of Métis petitioning efforts, as well as the focus of municipal efforts advocating for fishing licenses as part of relief efforts.

Despite increased interference and regulation, Métis maintained harvesting practices, acting in individual and collective ways to resist intrusion into their spaces. Métis fishermen responded by refusing Government requests for documenting the size of their catches and by regularly fishing without a license, challenging the authority of Fisheries agents. They adapted harvesting practices to skirt surveillance of Government agents and continued to harvest despite the risk of violating regulation. Amidst the growing politicization of Métis across Saskatchewan, Qu'Appelle Métis used familiar political strategies such as writing petitions to advocate for their interests. And, for the first time, signatories included women demonstrating, their growing public role alongside the men in their families and communities, but also that they were not afraid of challenging increased state intrusion into their lives.

Within this environment, Fisheries agents such as Gilchrist and Miller, appear as agents of state surveillance and enforcement but they also became intermediaries advocating for Métis. They exercised flexibility and made decisions not exclusively based on regulation, but with compassion and benevolence when they deemed enforcement would be cruel or unfair. Local governments acted on behalf of Qu'Appelle Métis, making a concerted and sometimes seemingly coordinated effort to advocate for policy amendments to not only meet Métis needs, but also to relieve their own financial burden in providing relief. The provincial Government sporadically acquiesced to these requests and concessions were temporary, made only according to immediate need. As a result, Government remained plagued with the question of how best to deal with Métis needs in a way that was sympathetic to their economic situation but also in the best interests of conservation efforts.

Chapter Eleven: "Down There in the Valley"

Métis families first came to the Valley region as buffalo hunters by the mid-nineteenth century. Families originally occupied wintering camps of a seasonal basis, but as the dwindling herds moved further westward, a year-round settlement grew around the Roman Catholic Mission and along the Qu'Appelle Lakes. By the late 1860s, there was a significant and growing Métis settlement in the Qu'Appelle Valley. These families maintained a subsistence lifestyle, relying initially on buffalo, supplemented by hunting and trapping other wild game, harvesting plants from the Valley environment and engaging in small-scale agriculture to varying degrees. This routine was carried over from their experience with the Hudson's Bay Company posts or their time in the Red River region. For these families, the buffalo hunt defined social, economic and political structures. Organization of the hunt reflected Métis extended family kinship relationships, self-governance and understandings of the prairie landscape. Métis lived and hunted in extended family groupings and organized themselves in ways to strategically utilize all available environmental resources. The very structure of the large annual summer hunts demonstrated the way Métis privileged kinship relationships in responding to changing environmental and economic conditions, allowing them to make a living by the hunt and through the production of robes, hides and pemmican. Within the hunt, there were clearly defined gender roles within which men and women worked in complementary ways as part of an integrated family economic unit. Women were responsible for buffalo processing, requiring intensive amounts of labour and expertise in the production of pemmican, meat, hides and robes.

Métis women, like other Indigenous women across Western Canada, also contributed their labour to the functioning of the fur posts, working alongside their husbands and contributing their labour in complementary ways. In exchange for rations and supplies, women at the posts provided gendered domestic services, and worked in planting and harvesting the post's gardens. The collaborative nature of men's and women's work in the posts' gardens, much like during the buffalo hunt, reveals few distinctions between gender roles, rather it was more important that all present contribute their labour when required. This also applied when there were limited provisions at the

fur posts. During these times, gender roles in supplying the posts with food were flexible, allowing women to supply small game, fish and wild plants they harvested, contributing to the diet of HBC employees. As a result, women's labour contributions and expertise were essential not only to family subsistence and economic exchange in the success of the buffalo hunt, but also to feeding the trade.

The collapse of the buffalo herds forced the Métis' economic adjustment. In the same way that seasonal occupation on the prairies had been an environmental adaption in response to movement of the buffalo herds, the shift toward year-round occupation of land along the Qu'Appelle Lakes by the late 1860s was a response to changing resource availability. In taking up land on a permanent year-round basis, Métis families followed recognizable land tenure practices, taking up land in a river lot system and along kinship lines as they had always done. The role of female kinship in defining these settlement patterns was significant. Often families settled along female kinship lines. In doing so they made decisions about how to maintain cultural connectedness, remain within the Valley environment, and provide for their families at the same time adapting to economic change.

As the buffalo economy came to an end, Qu'Appelle Métis increasingly integrated into the settler economy. They took work where they could, gathering buffalo bones, picking rocks or cutting wood, harvesting seneca root and berries, and selling fish or the handmade products of women's labour to maintain their economic independence while also preserving their connections to the land. Compensation for their work was often food or supplies Métis families did not produce themselves as they lived within a complex barter economy. In this work, Métis carried familiar labour roles forward and continued to work in complementary ways, often in an integrated family economy where all members of the family contributed their labour. Engaging in these types of wage labour activities provided economic stability and allowed Métis to continue practicing a subsistence economy and remain living within an intimately understood and familiar environment. Most engaged in wage labour when available and some looked to agriculture to provide for their families. Though families engaged in farming to varying degrees, there were examples where individuals achieved some success. Others practiced very little or no agriculture other than gardening. For most, they continued to rely on a

subsistence lifestyle, supplementing their economy with seasonal wage labour, and using their knowledge of the Valley landscape, not as land owners but as labourers in a settler economy.

When families moved, they did so according to recognizable community formation patterns. When taking up scrip and homestead at St. Delphine in the File Hills region, or when moving on to the road allowances within the Valley region, families made decisions about how to remain and re-establish themselves along familiar extended kinship lines. Living in these family clusters reveals how Métis families sustained a worldview that privileged kinship relationships and connections to the land despite challenges of a new social, economic, and political order. How these families spatially organized themselves and utilized the Valley resources was crucial to their understandings of identity and occupancy of this space.

As families increasingly immersed themselves in a settler economy, they felt the pressure of encroaching settlement and continued economic changes. Métis families recognized and responded in individual and collective ways to the imposition of settler colonialism, government surveillance and regulation over their lands and livelihoods. They advocated for access to lands and resources that would allow them to maintain their subsistence livelihoods and for recognition of their rights and title to land. They eagerly sent petitions to various agents within Government seeking to secure individual property ownership, advocating for access to resources and recognition of their rights. This was a familiar political strategy used consistently by Qu'Appelle Métis to have their collective voices heard. The nature and frequency of this petitioning reveals the growth of a Métis political consciousness and reinforced collective identity amongst Qu'Appelle Métis not only regionally, but also on a larger national scale. In their petitioning, Qu'Appelle Métis recognized and advocated for their own issues, but also larger issues facing Métis across the west.

When the Government refused to act in dealing with Métis rights and grievances, Qu'Appelle Métis petitioned as a means of political action but also as a demonstration of sovereignty over their territory. The Métis well understood the changes that had taken place in Manitoba leading to the creation of the province in 1870 and the implementation of scrip to extinguish Métis title to land, as well as changes resulting closer to home with

the negotiation of Treaty Four, the impending Dominion Lands Survey, and unavoidable settlement. They feared encroachment on their plots of land and pursued means to be successful in safeguarding their livelihood while also adapting to a new order. Métis responded to these changes and found ways to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights, in individual and collective ways. They used petitioning throughout the 1870s-1880s to have their rights recognized and to seek protections over their land tenure practices and their livelihoods. The maintenance of these practices ensured families would live in proximity to one another and continue to rely on kinship relationships. In addition, such protections would ensure Métis maintained private ownership over their plots of land as well as collective access to hunting and fishing territory within the Valley environment. When faced with the imposition of unsympathetic and foreign Dominion land and homestead policy that artificially divided Métis land holdings, they continued to advocate for their rights. Often, they found themselves in a precarious position, and in a three-way contest with First Nations and Government for access to land in the Qu'Appelle Valley. With treaty signing, and the refusal of Métis petitions to enter treaty, the Government recognized distinctions between First Nations and Métis that they applied to their dealings with Métis rights. According to the Government, they would deal with Métis landholders as regular settlers, and not based on any pre-existing Indigenous land title, forcing Métis to register their pre-existing claims according to homestead policy. Although this did protect their private property interests, tensions remained high because it did nothing to recognize Métis rights, title or access to lands and resources in the Qu'Appelle Valley.

Many were able to secure land title to the plots of land they occupied prior to survey. Their efforts to secure title were moreso to remain in the Valley region than to take up agriculture on an increased scale. Instead of farming for themselves, many chose to work as labourers for new land owners. This was likely because they did not have the capital to invest in the required machinery and implements but also because they wanted to remain in their close-knit extended family groupings rather than take up land removed from the community.

By 1885, as tensions were erupting across the North-West, the Government chose to act on Métis claims. Through the North-West Half-Breed Scrip Commission, Métis

would finally have their rights and title recognized. In the implementation of the scrip process, Qu'Appelle Métis found themselves embedded in a foreign and bureaucratic administrative process, often unsympathetic to their needs. They were, however, astute in initially negotiating and securing provisions for what they believed would benefit them, including the rights to purchase their pre-existing or waterfront properties and the right to withdraw from treaty and access scrip. Administrative issues plagued the scrip process. Most claimants ended up selling their scrip to land speculators for a fraction of their value. Selling their scrip provided Métis with an influx of cash in the short term. The ultimate shortcoming of the scrip system, however was that the exchange of land and money scrip differed and ultimately encouraged speculation and the removal of land from the Métis. Despite this, there were instances where Métis benefitted on a more long-term basis. Some were able to exchange their scrip certificates for homestead land in the File Hills where families once again reorganized themselves along recognizable cultural patterns and kinship lines. In the course of a few short decades the community of St. Delphine developed and some individuals had some success farming and ranching. Most, however, struggled economically and ultimately sold or lost their lands, returning to the Qu'Appelle Valley. Here, they joined extended family members in the same economic situation: displaced within the Qu'Appelle Valley by increased settlement these families took up residence on the road allowances along township lines and the lake shores. For most Métis, scrip and homestead policy did little to change the Métis economic situation or secure long-term land tenure.

Qu'Appelle Métis also responded in individual ways to settler colonialism as interventions seeped into and conflicted with their way of life. When confronted with fisheries regulation, they challenged Government agents and authorities so they could continue to make a living and practice their subsistence economy. They responded to the development of conservation policy that exerted control over their economies. As intervention increased into the twentieth century, regulation of Métis fishing intensified. Despite this, Métis continued collective political action, petitioning the federal Department of Fisheries but also increasingly petitioning the provincial Government to provide relief in the form of free fishing licenses. Throughout this period of increased surveillance, Métis maintained and adapted harvesting practices and resisted intrusion

into their spaces by Government agents. In the 1930s, petition signatories included women for the first time, demonstrating a growing politicization of Métis and the role of women in their communities. Within this environment, Government agents on occasion looked benevolently on the Métis. Municipalities sometimes advocated on their behalf in a concerted effort to advocate for policy amendments to meet Métis needs as well as reduce the municipalities' burden on providing relief. Government sporadically yielded to Métis requests, and only on a temporary basis according to immediate need. Government remained plagued with how to deal with the Métis while also enforcing conservation policy.

As Qu'Appelle Métis adapted to changing economic conditions, they maintained an integrated family economy where roles were complementary and defined by gender yet flexible in response to labour demands and immediate need. Their economy shifted over time from buffalo hunting to wage labour but they continued to rely on the land to make a living. For many Métis, they no longer owned the land they lived on, but utilized their knowledge of the Valley environment in providing their labour to other farmers. In this shifting economy, all members contributed their labour and women had important roles in feeding the family. Métis engaged in land use activities and labour to ensure the well-being of the family and community.

Métis women recognized the essential role of food production to their economy, but also the social and political commitments that food facilitated. Women were responsible for feeding their families by gathering, preparing and preserving wild foods as well as by growing large vegetable gardens. Métis women engaged in a variety of activities, using their skills and expertise related to land use and food production that they had learned from their own mothers and grandmothers. They demonstrated decision-making and were flexible in their activities and in their contribution to the family economy.

The food women prepared was an important part of all Métis social gatherings and celebrations. On these occasions, Métis women served the finest food available and worked diligently to treat all guests hospitably. These women understood the impact a fine meal, hospitality, and generosity could have on social, political, and economic relationships. Women were creative and flexible in adding variety to their diet and in

preparing appetizing and flavourful dishes from simple, and often very few, ingredients.

Métis women found opportunity to engage in a cash economy outside of the home, working as domestics in the homes of their husband's employer or by selling the products of their labour. They did this while also remaining responsible for domestic responsibilities within the family. In many instances, women marketed their traditional artistic and sewing skills, handed down to them over generations, to bring additional income, and necessary food and supplies into the home. Women's roles in the family changed as they aged, but the respect they received for their knowledge and skills did not diminish. These women played a significant role in cultural reproduction including the transmission of cultural values, practices and understandings to younger generations.

Métis families did not fully engage in a cash economy but harvested or produced for themselves many of the foods they required. They also traded and bartered for additional staple items, using their labour as currency. Families took advantage of economic opportunities and adapted to the growing settler agrarian economy in ways that were recognizable and familiar. They did not completely accept a foreign and imposed way of life, but were selective in how they adapted and what elements of their worldview and subsistence economies they maintained.

When families moved, they resettled along past community formation practices that privileged kinship and followed familiar land use patterns. For Qu'Appelle Métis families, kinship relationships were central to Métis worldview and how they understood themselves in this space. They made choices about how to remain in extended family groupings and remain within traditional territory to reaffirm cultural connectedness, relationship, family. They made choices to live as an extended family rather than relocate, disperse or move to a different area, at least initially. Métis settlement in the Valley was a continuation of past community formation and organizational structures, privileging kinship and following familiar land use and occupancy patterns. Each time these families moved within their territory, they resettled along extended family groupings and adapted to changing economic, social and political situations.

The overarching story of the Qu'Appelle Métis is a story of change and adaptation, but also of stability. This work traces Qu'Appelle Valley Métis economic activity and land occupancy changes from the 1850s to 1950, with a focus on food

harvesting and production and gender roles. It advances three main arguments. First, when faced with economic and political change, Qu'Appelle Métis relied upon recognizable community formation patterns and understandings of kinship relationships when making decisions about how to remain within familiar territory. Second, in maintaining occupancy of this territory, they met and responded in individual and collective ways to the imposition of settler colonialism and government interventions into their livelihoods. Last, as they adapted to changing economic conditions, they maintained an integrated family economy where roles were complementary and defined by gender yet flexible in response to labour demands and immediate need. As a result, women's labour was crucial to the success and survival of Qu'Appelle Métis families, particularly in relation to their food harvesting, production, preservation and preparation activities.

This research is local but has broad implications and is a framework for examining transnational issues including Indigenous responses to settler colonialism, increased regulation and surveillance of Indigenous economies and livelihoods, and the erasure of Indigenous peoples from the landscape. Tracing Métis land tenure practices and change over time, this research challenges the dominant Canadian settlement narrative that presented the prairie west as open and ready for settlement following the Dominion Lands survey. It reveals the many ways Métis adapted and responded to changes brought about by settler colonialism and increased government intervention into their livelihoods.

This work also adds nuance to what is known about Prairie Métis experiences in the early to mid-twentieth century as families and communities were increasingly marginalized and pushed to the road allowances. It elucidates some of the reasons that Métis ended up on the road allowance and expands our understanding of these places as more than simply marginal Crown lands. These were places where families lived according to a Métis worldview and culturally thrived despite their poverty. Living on the road allowance, Métis were not merely living as squatters on Crown land but that they continued to live in a recognizable community formation patterns that prioritized kinship relationships and responsibilities. Women's kinship was particularly important in structuring these communities.

This research adds to our understanding of the role of food and gender in Métis social, economic, and political systems. It reveals a continued Métis reliance on a subsistence economy that included hunting, trapping, fishing, and gathering of wild foods mixed with small-scale agriculture. It demonstrates the significant social, economic and political ways food created solidified relationships, and the ways women contributed to the family economy through their food harvesting, production, preparation and preservation activities.

Last, this work connects individual and community stories to the Qu'Appelle Valley, and fixes commonly held values, community practices, protocols, and mutual responsibilities to this place. Métis Old People regularly repeated the phrase "Down There in the Valley" as they began their stories. In its repetition, this phrase links these stories to the Qu'Appelle Valley landscape and embeds it with meaning. Supplementing these stories with family genealogies and Historical Geographic Information Systems methodologies links people and their stories to the spaces that are important to them, privileging Indigenous value systems, perspectives and worldviews. This is particularly important for telling Indigenous stories which are deeply rooted in local landscapes. The Qu'Appelle Valley, "their Valley," is central to how these families and communities understand themselves and their history. These stories are then a narrative framework to explain Métis presence in the Valley region. They illuminate social, economic and cultural activity where Métis lived according to a worldview defined by extended family networks, the responsibility individuals had to one another in both their immediate and extended family, as well as their relationship to the Valley landscape.

Appendix – Petitions signed by Qu'Appelle Métis

Date	From	To	Number of Signatories
3 May 1873	John Fisher and others, Fort Qu'Appelle	Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor, North-West Territories	11 heads of families
11 September 1874	Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle	Alexander Morris, Lieutenant Governor, North-West Territories	31 heads of families
6 September 1876	Half-Breeds at Fort Walsh, entry into Treaty 4	Inspector James Morrow Walsh, N-W.M.P.	30 heads of families
2 August 1878	Half-Breeds living in the vicinity of Cypress Hills	Privy Council of the North-West Territories	280 signatories (Approximately 100 linked to the Qu'Appelle Valley)
2 September 1881	Pierre LaPierre, Simon Blondin, John Fisher, Alexander Fisher, John Simpson, Xavier Desnomme and others, the Half-Breeds of Qu'Appelle Settlement	Marquis of Lorne, Governor General of Canada	113 individuals
29 August 1882	Half-Breed Settlers	Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant Governor, North-West Territories	44 heads of families
1885	Qu'Appelle Valley Half-Breeds	Department of the Interior	
16 October 1886	Half-Breeds of the Qu'Appelle District who have recently left Treaty with a view to taking Scrip	Thomas White, Minister of the Interior	34 heads of families
1888	Simon Blondeau and others	Department of Marine and Fisheries	
28 May 1931	Baptiste Robillard and others	Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch.	47 individuals (Includes 23 women)
19 September 1931	Lebret Métis	J.T.M. Anderson, Minister of Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch	Sixty-eight heads of families, representing 277 individuals, (Includes eight women)

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